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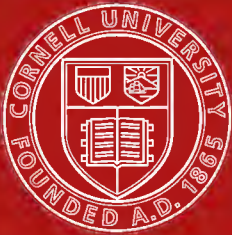
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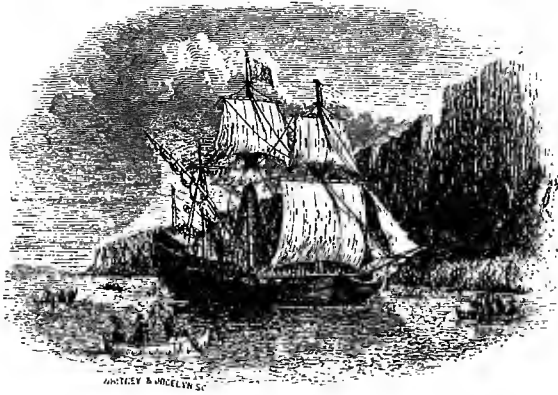
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New York Historical Society.

SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION.

M DCCC LIV.

Semi-Centennial Celebration.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
FOUNDING
OF THE
NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1854.

NEW YORK:
PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY.

M DCCC LIV.



JOHN F. TROW, PRINTER,
49 Ann street.

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1854.

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THE NECESSITY, THE REALITY, AND THE PROMISE
OF THE PROGRESS OF THE HUMAN RACE.

O R A T I O N

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

NOVEMBER 20, 1854.

BY

GEORGE BANCROFT,

A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

NEW YORK:
PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY.

M DCCCLIV.

At a meeting of the New York Historical Society, held at Niblo's Saloon in the city of New York, for the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary, on Monday afternoon, November 20, 1854,

"The Rev. George W. Bethune, D. D., submitted the following resolution, which was seconded by the Hon. William W. Campbell, and unanimously adopted :

"RESOLVED, That the thanks of the Society be tendered to the Hon. George Bancroft for the able, interesting, and highly instructive address which he has delivered on this occasion, and that a copy be requested for publication."

Extract from the Minutes :

ANDREW WARNER,
RECORDING SECRETARY.

ORATION.

BROTHERS, GUESTS, AND FRIENDS OF THE NEW YORK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY :

WE are assembled to celebrate the completion of a half century, unequalled in its discoveries and its deeds. Man is but the creature of yesterday, and fifty years form a great length in the chain of his entire existence. Inferior objects attract the inquirer who would go back to remotest antiquity. The student of the chronology of the earth may sit on the bluffs that overhang the Mississippi, and muse on the myriads of years during which the powers of nature have been depositing the materials of its delta. He may then, by the aid of induction, draw nearer to the beginnings of time, as he meditates on the succession of ages that assisted to construct the cliffs which raise their bastions over the stream ; or to bury in compact layers the fern-like forests that have stored the bosom of the great valley with coal ; or to crystallize the ancient limestone into marble ; or, at a still earlier epoch, to compress liquid masses of the globe into seams of granite. But the records of these transitions gain their chief interest from their illustrating the revolutions through which our

planet was fashioned into a residence for man. Science may roam into the abysses of the past, when the earth moved silently in its courses without observers; just as it may reach those far-off regions of nebular fields of light, whose distance no numbers that the human faculties may grasp can intelligibly express. But as the sublime dwells not in space, so it dwells not in duration. To search for it aright, we must contemplate the higher subject of man. It is but a few centuries since he came into life; and yet the study of his nature and his destiny surpasses all else that can engage his thoughts. At the close of a period which has given new proof that unceasing movement is the law of all that is finite, we are called upon to observe the general character of the changes in his state. Our minds irresistibly turn to consider the laws, the circumstances and the prospects of his career; we are led to inquire whether his faculties and his relations to the universe compel him to a steady course of improvement; whether, in the aggregate, he has actually made advances; and what hopes we may cherish respecting his future. The occasion invites me to speak to you of the NECESSITY, the REALITY, and the PROMISE of the progress of mankind.

Since every thing that is limited suffers perpetual alteration, the condition of our race is one of growth or of decay. It is the glory of man that he is conscious of this law of his existence. He alone is gifted with reason which looks upward as well as before and after, and connects him with the world that is not discerned by the senses. He alone has the faculty so to combine thought with affection, that he can lift up his heart and feel not for himself only, but for his brethren and his

kind. Every man is in substance equal to his fellow man. His nature is changed neither by time nor by country. He bears no marks of having risen to his present degree of perfection by successive transmutations from inferior forms; but by the peculiarity and superiority of his powers he shows himself to have been created separate and distinct from all other classes of animal life. He is neither degenerating into such differences as could in the end no longer be classified together, nor rising into a higher species. Each member of the race is in will, affection and intellect, consubstantial with every other; no passion, no noble or degrading affection, no generous or selfish impulse, has ever appeared, of which the germ does not exist in every breast. No science has been reached, no thought generated, no truth discovered, which has not from all time existed potentially in every human mind. The belief in the progress of the race does not, therefore, spring from the supposed possibility of his acquiring new faculties, or coming into the possession of a new nature.

Still less does truth vary. They speak falsely who say that truth is the daughter of time; it is the child of eternity, and as old as the Divine mind. The perception of it takes place in the order of time; truth itself knows nothing of the succession of ages. Neither does morality need to perfect itself; it is what it always has been, and always will be. Its distinctions are older than the sea or the dry land, than the earth or the sun. The relation of good to evil is from the beginning, and is unalterable.

The progress of man consists in this, that he himself arrives at the perception of truth. The Divine mind, which is its source, left it to be discovered, appropriated and developed by finite creatures.

The life of an individual is but a breath ; it comes forth like a flower, and flees like a shadow. Were no other progress, therefore, possible than that of the individual, one period would have little advantage over another. But as every man partakes of the same faculties and is consubstantial with all, it follows that the race also has an existence of its own ; and this existence becomes richer, more varied, free and complete, as time advances. COMMON SENSE implies by its very name, that each individual is to contribute some share toward the general intelligence. The many are wiser than the few ; the multitude than the philosopher ; the race than the individual ; and each successive generation than its predecessor.

The social condition of a century, its faith and its institutions, are always analogous to its acquisitions. Neither philosophy, nor government, nor political institutions, nor religious knowledge, can remain much behind, or go much in advance, of the totality of contemporary intelligence. The age furnishes to the master-workman the materials with which he builds. The outbreak of a revolution is the pulsation of the time, healthful or spasmodic, according to its harmony with the civilization from which it springs. Each new philosophical system is the heliograph of an evanescent condition of public thought. The state in which we are, is man's natural state at this moment ; but it neither should be nor can be his permanent state, for his existence is flowing on in eternal motion, with nothing fixed but the certainty of change. Now, by the necessity of the case, the movement of the human mind, taken collectively, is always toward something better. There exists in each individual, alongside of his own personality, the ideal man who represents the race. Every one bears

about within himself the consciousness that his course is a struggle ; and perpetually feels the contrast between his own limited nature and the better life of which he conceives. He cannot state a proposition respecting a finite object, but it includes also a reference to the infinite. He cannot form a judgment, but it combines ideal truth and partial error, and, as a consequence, sets in action the antagonism between the true and the perfect on the one side, and the false and the imperfect on the other ; and in this contest the true and the perfect must prevail, for they have the advantage of being perennial.

In public life, by the side of the actual state of the world, there exists the ideal state toward which it should tend. This antagonism lies at the root of all political combinations that ever have been or ever can be formed. The elements on which they rest, whether in monarchies, aristocracies, or in republics, are but three, not one of which can be wanting, or society falls to ruin. The course of human destiny is ever a rope of three strands. One party may found itself on things as they are, and strive for their unaltered perpetuity ; this is conservatism, always appearing wherever established interests exist, and never capable of unmingled success, because finite things are ceaselessly in motion. Another may be based on theoretic principles, and struggle unrelentingly to conform society to the absolute law of Truth and Justice ; and this, though it kindle the purest enthusiasm, can likewise never perfectly succeed, because the materials of which society is composed partake of imperfection, and to extirpate all that is imperfect would lead to the destruction of society itself. And there may be a third, which seeks to reconcile the two, but which yet can never thrive by itself, since it depends

for its activity on the clashing between the fact and the higher law. Without all the three, the fates could not spin their thread. As the motions of the solar world require the centripetal force, which, by itself alone, would consolidate all things in one massive confusion; the centrifugal force, which, if uncontrolled, would hurl the planets on a tangent into infinite space; and lastly, that reconciling adjustment, which preserves the two powers in harmony; so society always has within itself the elements of conservatism, of absolute right, and of reform.

The present state of the world is accepted by the wise and benevolent as the necessary and natural result of all its antecedents. But the statesman, whose heart has been purified by the love of his kind, and whose purpose solemnized by faith in the immutability of justice, seeks to apply every principle which former ages or his own may have mastered, and to make every advancement that the culture of his time will sustain. In a word, he will never omit an opportunity to lift his country out of the inferior sphere of its actual condition, into the higher and better sphere that is nearer to ideal perfection.

The merits of great men are to be tested by this criterion. I speak of the judgment of the race, not of the opinion of classes. The latter exalt, and even deify the advocates of their selfishness; and often proportion their praise to the daring, with which right and truth have been made to succumb to their interests. They lavish laurels all the more profusely to hide the baldness of their heroes. But reputation so imparted is like every thing else that rests only on the finite. Vain is the applause of factions, or the suffrages of those whose fortunes are benefited; fame so attained, must

pass away like the interests of classes ; but the name of those who have studied the well-being of their fellow-men, and in their generation have assisted to raise the world from the actual toward the ideal, is repeated in all the temples of humanity, and lives not only in its intelligence, but in its heart. These are they, whose glory calumny cannot tarnish, nor pride beat down. Connecting themselves with man's advancement, their example never loses its lustre ; and the echo of their footsteps is heard throughout all time with sympathy and love.

The necessity of the progress of the race follows, therefore, from the fact, that the great Author of all life has left truth in its immutability to be observed, and has endowed man with the power of observation and generalization. Precisely the same conclusions will appear, if we contemplate society from the point of view of the unity of the universe. The unchanging character of law is the only basis on which continuous action can rest. Without it man would be but as the traveller over endless morasses ; the builder on quicksands ; the mariner without compass or rudder, driven successively whithersoever changing winds may blow. The universe is the reflex and image of its Creator. "The true work of art," says Michael Angelo, "is but a shadow of the Divine perfections." We may say in a more general manner, that BEAUTY ITSELF IS BUT THE SENSIBLE IMAGE OF THE INFINITE ; that all creation is a manifestation of the Almighty ; not the result of caprice, but the glorious display of his perfection ; and as the universe thus produced, is always in the course of change, so its regulating mind is a living Providence, perpetually exerting itself anew. If his designs could be thwarted, we should lose the great evi-

dence of his unity, as well as the anchor of our own hope.

Harmony is the characteristic of the intellectual system of the universe ; and immutable laws of moral existence must pervade all time and all space, all ages and all worlds. The comparative anatomist has studied, analyzed and classified every species of vertebrate existence that now walks, or flies, or creeps, or swims, or reposes among the fossil remains of lost forms of being ; and he discovers that they all without exception are analogous ; so that the induction becomes irresistible, that an archetype existed previous to the creation of the first of the kind. Shall we then hesitate to believe that the fixedness of law likewise pervades the moral world ? We cannot shut our eyes to the established fact, that an ideal, or archetype, prescribed the form of animal life ; and shall we not believe that the type of all intellectual life likewise exists in the Divine mind ?

I know that there is a pride which calls this fatalism, and which rebels at the thought that the Father of life should control what he has made. There are those who must needs assert for their individual selves the constant possession of that power which the great English poet represents the bad angels to have lost heaven for once attempting to usurp ; they are not content with being gifted with the faculty of discerning the counsels of God, and becoming happy by conforming to his decrees, but claim the privilege of acting irrespective of those decrees. Unsatisfied with having been created in his image, they assume the liberty to counteract his will. They do not perceive that cosmical order depends on the universality and absolute certainty of law ; that for that end, events in their course are not merely as fixed as Ararat and the

Andes, but follow laws that are much older than Andes or Ararat, that are as old as those which upheaved the mountains. The glory of God is not contingent on man's good will, but all existence subserves his purposes. The system of the universe is as a celestial poem, whose beauty is from all eternity, and must not be marred by human interpolations. Things proceed as they were ordered, in their nice, and well-adjusted, and perfect harmony; so that as the hand of the skilful artist gathers music from the harp-strings, history calls it forth from the well-tuned chords of time. Not that this harmony can be heard during the tumult of action. Philosophy comes after events, and gives the reason of them, and describes the nature of their results. The great mind of collective man may, one day, so improve in self-consciousness, as to interpret the present and foretell the future; but as yet, the end of what is now happening, though we ourselves partake in it, seems to fall out by chance. All is nevertheless one whole; individuals, families, peoples, the race, march in accord with the Divine will; and when any part of the destiny of humanity is fulfilled, we see the ways of Providence vindicated. The antagonisms of imperfect matter and the perfect idea, of liberty and necessary law, become reconciled. What seemed irrational confusion, appears as the web woven by light, liberty and love. But this is not perceived till a great act in the drama of life is finished. The prayer of the patriarch, when he desired to behold the Divinity face to face, was denied; but he was able to catch a glimpse of Jehovah, after He had passed by; and so it fares with our search for Him in the wrestlings of the world. It is when the hour of conflict is over, that history comes to a right understanding of the strife, and is

ready to exclaim: "Lo! God is here, and we knew it not." At the foot of every page in the annals of nations, may be written, "God reigns." Events, as they pass away, "proclaim their Great Original;" and if you will but listen reverently, you may hear the receding centuries as they roll into the dim distances of departed time, perpetually chanting "TE DEUM LAUDAMUS," with all the choral voices of the countless congregations of the ages.

It is because God is visible in History that its office is the noblest except that of the poet. The poet is at once the interpreter and the favorite of Heaven. He catches the first beam of light that flows from its uncreated source. He repeats the message of the Infinite, without always being able to analyze it, and often without knowing how he received it, or why he was selected for its utterance. To him and to him alone history yields in dignity; for she not only watches the great encounters of life, but recalls what had vanished, and partaking of a bliss like that of creating, restores it to animated being. The mineralogist takes special delight in contemplating the process of crystallization, as though he had caught nature at her work as a geometrician; giving herself up to be gazed at without concealment such as she appears in the very moment of exertion. But history, as she reclines in the lap of eternity, sees the mind of humanity itself engaged in formative efforts, constructing sciences, promulgating laws, organizing commonwealths, and displaying its energies in the visible movement of its intelligence. Of all pursuits that require analysis, history, therefore, stands first. It is equal to philosophy; for as certainly as the actual bodies forth the ideal, so certainly does history contain

philosophy. It is grander than the natural sciences ; for its study is man, the last work of creation, and the most perfect in its relations with the Infinite.

In surveying the short period since man was created, the proofs of progress are so abundant that we do not know with which of them to begin, or how they should be classified. He is seen in the earliest stages of society, bare of abstract truth, unskilled in the methods of induction, and hardly emancipated from bondage to the material universe. How wonderful is it, then, that a being whose first condition was so weak, so humble, and so naked, and of whom no monument older than forty centuries can be found, should have accumulated such fruitful stores of intelligence and have attained such perfection of culture !

Look round upon this beautiful earth, this temperate zone of the solar system, and see how much man has done for its subjection and adornment ; making the wilderness blossom with cities, and the seemingly inhospitable sea cheerfully social with the richly-freighted fleets of world-wide commerce. Look also at the condition of society, and consider by what amenities barbarism has been softened and refined ; what guarantees of intelligence and liberty have superseded the lawlessness of brute force, and what copious interchanges of thought and love have taken the place of the sombre stolidity of the savage. The wanderings of the nations are greater now than ever in time past, and productive of happier results. Peaceful emigration sets more myriads in motion than all the hordes of armed barbarians, whether Gauls or Scythians, Goths or Huns, Scandinavians or Saracens, that ever burst from the steppes of Asia and the Northern nurseries of men. Our own city gives evidence that the civilizea

world is becoming one federation ; for, its storehouses exhibit all products, from furs that are whitened by Arctic snows, to spices ripened by the burning sun of the equator ; and its people is the representative of all the cultivated nations of Europe.

Every clime is tasked also to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge. Minerals that lie on the peaks of the Himalayas, animals that hide in the densest jungles of Africa, flowers that bloom in the solitudes of Sumatra, or the trackless swamps along the Amazon, are brought within the observation and domain of science.

With equal diligence the internal structure of plants and animals has been subjected to examination. We may gaze with astonishment at the advances which the past fifty years have made in the science of comparative physiology. By a most laborious and long continued use of the microscope, and by a vast number of careful and minute dissections, man has gained such insight into animal being, as not only to define its primary groups, but almost to draw the ideal archetype that preceded their creation. Not content with the study of his own organization and the comparison of it with the Fauna of every zone, he has been able to count the pulsations of the heart of a caterpillar ; to watch the flow of blood through the veins of the silkworm ; to enumerate the millions of living things that dwell in a drop of water ; to take the census of creatures so small, that parts of their members remain invisible to the most powerful microscope ; to trace the lungs of the insect which floats so gayly on the limber fans of its wings, and revels in the full fruition of its transcendent powers of motion.

The astronomer, too, has so perfected his skill, that he has weighed in the balance some, even, of the stars,

and marked the course and the period of their revolutions; while, within the limits of our own system, he has watched the perturbations of the wandering fires, till he has achieved his crowning victory by discovering *a priori* the existence and the place of an exterior planet.

I have reminded you of the few hundreds of years during which man has been a tenant of earth, and of the great proportion that the last half century bears to the whole of his existence. Let us consider this more closely; for I dare assert that, in some branches of human activity, the period we commemorate has done more for his instruction and improvement than all which went before.

I do not here refer to our own country, because it is altogether new, though its growth merits a passing remark; for within this time the area of our land has been so extended that a similar increase, twice repeated, would carry THE STARS AND STRIPES to the polar ice and to the isthmus; while our population now exceeds fivefold all who existed at the end of the two previous centuries, and probably outnumbered all the generations that sleep beneath the soil. I speak rather of results in which the old world takes its share; and I will begin the enumeration by reference to an improvement which we may delight to consider our own. Your thoughts go in advance of me to recall the fact, that since our Society was organized, steam was first employed for both interior and oceanic navigation. We, BROTHERS of the NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, remember with pride that this great achievement in behalf of the connection and the unity of the world, is due to the genius of one of our members, and the encouragement of another, to ROBERT FULTON and to ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

The same superiority belongs to this age in reference to the construction of the means of internal communication. What are all the artificial channels of travel and of commerce that previously existed, compared with the canals and railroads constructed in our time? I shall not pause to estimate the number of these newly made highways; their collective length; their capacity for journeyings and for trade; I leave to others to contrast the occasional Oriental or African caravan with the daily freight-train on one of our iron pathways; the post-chaise, the stage-coach, and the diligence with the incessant movement in the canal boats and the flying cars of the railroad. Yet in your presence, MY BROTHERS, remembering the eleven men who, fifty years ago, met and organized our society, I must for an instant direct attention to the system which connects our own Hudson with the basins of the St. Lawrence, of the Delaware, of the Susquehanna and of the Mississippi. This magnificent work, one of the noblest triumphs of civilized man, so friendly to peace and industry, to national union and true glory, was effected through the special instrumentality of one of our original founders and most active members; the same DE WITT CLINTON, who in days when the city of New York was proud of her enlightened magistracy, was at the head of her municipal government, esteeming it a part of his public duty to care disinterestedly for the welfare of science, and the fame of the great men of the country.

The half century which now closes, is likewise found to surpass all others, if we consider the extent of its investigations into the history of the earth. Geology, in that time, has assumed a severe scientific

form, doing the highest honor, not merely to the individual men who have engaged in the pursuit, but to human nature itself, by the persevering application of inductive reasoning, and the imperturbable serenity with which seeming contradictions have been studied till they have been found to confirm the general laws. Thus the geologist has been able to ascertain, in some degree, the chronology of our planet ; to demonstrate the regularity of its structure where it seemed most disturbed ; and where nature herself was at fault, and the trail of her footsteps broken, to restore the just arrangement of strata that had been crushed into confusion, or turned over in apparently inexplicable and incongruous folds. He has perused the rocky tablets on which time-honored nature has set her inscriptions. He has opened the massive sepulchres of departed forms of being, and pored over the copious records preserved there in stone, till they have revealed the majestic march of creative power, from the organism of the zoophyte entombed in the lowest depths of Siluria, through all the rising gradations of animal life, up to its sublimest result in God-like man.

Again : It is only in our day that the sun has been taught to do the work of an artist, and in obedience to man's will, the great wave of light in its inconceivable swiftness is compelled to delineate with inimitable exactness any object that the eye of day looks upon.

Of the nature of electricity, more has been discovered in the last fifty years than in all past time, not even excepting the age when our own Franklin called it from the clouds. This aerial invisible power has learnt to fly as man's faithful messenger, till the mystic wires tremble with his passions and bear his errands on the wings of lightning. He divines how this agen-

cy which holds the globe in its invisible embrace, guides floating atoms to their places in the crystal ; or teaches the mineral ores the lines in which they should move, where to assemble together, and where to lie down and take their rest. It whispers to the meteorologist the secrets of the atmosphere and the skies. For the chemist in his laboratory it perfects the instruments of heat, dissolves the closest affinities, and reunites the sun-dere'd elements. It joins the artisan at his toil, and busily employed at his side, this subtlest and swiftest of existences tamely applies itself to its task, with patient care reproduces the designs of the engraver or the plastic art, and disposes the metal with a skilful delicacy and exactness which the best workman cannot rival. Nay more : it enters into the composition of man himself, and is ever present as the inmost witness of his thoughts and volitions. These are discoveries of our time.

But enough of this contrast of the achievement of one age with that of all preceding ones. It may seem to be at variance with our theme, that as republican institutions gain ground, WOMAN appears less on the theatre of events. She, whose presence in this briary world is as a lily among thorns, whose smile is pleasant like the light of morning, and whose eye is the gate of heaven ; she, whom nature so reveres, that the lovely veil of her spirit is the best terrestrial emblem of beauty, must cease to command armies or reign supreme over nations. Yet the progress of liberty, while it has made her less conspicuous, has redeemed her into the possession of the full dignity of her nature, has made her not man's slave, but his companion, his counsellor, and fellow-martyr ; and, for an occasional ascendancy in political affairs has substituted the uni-

form enjoyment of domestic equality. The avenue to active public life seems closed against her, but without impairing her power over mind, or her fame. The lyre is as obedient to her touch, the muse as coming to her call, as to that of man ; and truth in its purity finds no more honored interpreter.

When comparisons are drawn between longer periods, the progress of the race appears from the change in the condition of its classes. Time knows no holier mission than to assert the rights of labor, and it has, in some measure, been mindful of the duty. Were Aristotle and Plato to come among us, they would find no contrast more complete than between the workshops of their Athens, and those of New York. In their day the bondman practised the mechanic arts ; nor was it conceived that the world could do its work except by the use of slaves. But labor deserves and has the right to be dignified and ennobled, and the auspicious revolution in its condition has begun. Here the mechanic, at the shipyard, or the iron-works, or wherever may be the task of his choice, owns no master on earth ; and while, by the careful study and employment of the forces of nature, he multiplies his powers, he sweetens his daily toil by the consciousness of personal independence, and the enjoyment of his acknowledged claim to honor no less than to reward.

The fifty years which we celebrate, have taken mighty strides toward the abolition of servitude. Prussia, in the hour of its sufferings and its greatest calamities, renovated its existence partly by the establishment of schools, and partly by changing its serfs into a proprietary peasantry. In Hungary the attempt toward preserving the nationality of the Magyars may have failed ; but the last vestiges of bondage have been

effaced, and the holders of the plough have become the owners of themselves and of its soil.

If events do, as I believe, correspond to the Divine idea ; if God is the fountain of all goodness, the inspirer of true affection, the source of all intelligence ; there is nothing of so great moment to the race as the conception of his existence ; and a true apprehension of his relations to man must constitute the turning point in the progress of the world. And it has been so. A better knowledge of his nature is the dividing line that separates ancient history from modern ; the old time from the new. The thought of Divine unity as an absolute cause was familiar to antiquity ; but the undivided testimony of the records of all cultivated nations shows that it took no hold of the popular affections. Philosophers might conceive this Divine unity as purest action, unmixed with matter ; as fate, holding the universe in its invincible, unrelenting grasp ; as, reason, going forth to the work of creation ; as the primal source of the ideal archetypes, according to which the world was fashioned ; as boundless power, careless of boundless existence ; as the infinite one, slumbering unconsciously in the infinite all. Nothing of this could take hold of the common mind, or make

“ Peor and Baalim
Forsake their temples dim,” . . .

or throw down the altars of superstition.

For the regeneration of the world, it was requisite that the Divine Being should enter into the abodes and the hearts of men, and dwell there ; that a belief in him should be received, which should include all truth respecting his essence ; that he should be known not only as an abstract and absolute cause, but as the infi-

nite fountain of moral excellence and beauty ; not as a distant Providence of boundless power, and uncertain or inactive will, but as God present in the flesh ; not as an absolute lawgiver, holding the material world and all intelligent existence in the chains of necessity, but as a creative spirit, indwelling in man, his fellow-worker and guide.

When the Divine Being was thus presented to the soul, he touched at once man's aspirations, affections and intelligence, and faith in him sunk into the inmost heart of humanity. In vain did restless pride, as that of ARIUS, seek to paganize Christianity and make it the ally of imperial despotism ; to prefer a belief resting on authority and unsupported by an inward witness, over the clear revelation of which the millions might see and feel and know the divine glory ; to substitute the conception, framed after the pattern of heathenism, of an agent, superhuman yet finite, for faith in the ever-continuing presence of God with man ; to wrong the greatness and sanctity of the Spirit of God by representing it as a birth of time. Against these attempts to subordinate the enfranchising virtue of truth to false worship and to arbitrary power, reason asserted its supremacy, and the party of superstition was driven from the field. Then mooned Ashtaroth was eclipsed, and Osiris was seen no more in Memphian grove ; then might have been heard the crash of the falling temples of Polytheism ; and, instead of them, came that harmony which holds Heaven and Earth in happiest union.

Amid the deep sorrows of humanity during the sad conflict which was protracted through centuries for the overthrow of the past and the reconstruction of society, the consciousness of an incarnate God carried

peace into the bosom of mankind. That faith emancipated the slave, broke the bondage of woman, redeemed the captive, elevated the low, lifted up the oppressed, consoled the wretched, inspired alike the heroes of thought and the countless masses. The downtrodden nations clung to it as to the certainty of their future emancipation; and it so filled the heart of the greatest poet of the Middle Ages—perhaps the greatest poet of all time—that he had no prayer so earnest as to behold in the profound and clear substance of the eternal light, that circling of reflected glory which showed the image of man.

From the time that this truth of the triune God was clearly announced, he was no longer dimly conceived as a remote and shadowy causality, but appeared as all that is good and beautiful and true; as goodness itself, incarnate and interceding, redeeming and inspiring; the union of liberty, love, and light; the infinite cause, the infinite mediator, the infinite in and with the universe, as the paraclete and comforter. The doctrine once communicated to man, was not to be eradicated. It spread as widely, as swiftly, and as silently as light, and the idea of God WITH US dwelt and dwells in every system of thought that can pretend to vitality; in every oppressed people, whose struggles to be free have the promise of success; in every soul that sighs for redemption.

This brings me to the last division of my subject. That God has dwelt and dwells with humanity is not only the noblest illustration of its nature, but the perfect guarantee for its progress. We are entering on a new era in the history of the race, and though we cannot cast its horoscope, we at least may in some measure discern the course of its motion.

Here we are met at the very threshold of our argument by an afterbirth of the materialism of the last century. A system which professes to re-construct society on the simple observation of the laws of the visible universe, and which is presented with arrogant pretension under the name of the "Positive Philosophy," scoffs at all questions of metaphysics and religious faith as insoluble and unworthy of human attention; and affects to raise the banner of an affirming belief in the very moment that it describes its main characteristic as a refusal to recognise the infinite. How those who own no source of knowledge but the senses, can escape its humiliating yoke, I leave them to discover. But it is as little entitled to be feared as to be received. When it has put together all that it can collect of the laws of the material universe, it can advance no further toward the explanation of existence, morals, or reason. They who listen to the instructions of inward experience, may smile at the air of wisdom with which a scheme that has no basis in the soul is presented to the world as a new universal creed, the Catholic Church of the materialist. Its handful of acolytes wonder why they remain so few. But Atheism never holds sway over human thought except as a usurper; no child of its own succeeding. Error is a convertible term with decay. Falsehood and death are synonymes. Falsehood can gain no permanent foothold in the immortal soul; for there can be no abiding or real faith, except in that which is eternally and universally true. The future will never produce a race of atheists, and their casual appearance is but the evidence of some ill-understood truth; some mistaken direction of the human mind; some perverse or imperfect view of creation. The atheist denies the life of

life, which is the source of liberty. Proclaiming himself a mere finite thing of to-day, he rejects all connection with the infinite. Pretending to search for truth, he abjures the spirit of truth. Were it possible that the world of mankind could become without God, that greatest death, the death of the race would ensue. It is because man cannot separate himself from his inward experience and his yearning after the infinite, that he is capable of progress; that he can receive a religion whose history is the triumph of right over evil, whose symbol is the resurrection.

The reciprocal relation between God and humanity constitutes the UNITY of the race. The more complete recognition of that unity is the first great promise which we receive from the future. Nations have, indeed, had their separate creeds and institutions and homes. The commonwealth of mankind, as a great whole, was not to be constructed in one generation. But the different peoples are to be considered as its component parts, prepared, like so many springs and wheels, one day to be put together.

Every thing tends to that consummation. Geographical research has penetrated nearly every part of the world, revealed the paths of the ocean, and chronicled even the varying courses of the winds; while commerce circles the globe. At our Antipodes, a new continent, lately tenanted only by the wildest of men and the strangest products of nature, the kangaroo and the quadruped with the bill of a bird, becomes an outpost of civilization, one day to do service in regenerating the world.

In this great work our country holds the noblest rank. Rome subdued the regions round the Mediterranean and the Euxine, both inland seas; the

German Empire spread from the German Ocean to the Adriatic. Our land extends far into the wilderness, and beyond the wilderness; and while on this side the great mountains it gives the Western nations of Europe a theatre for the renewal of their youth, on the transmontane side, the hoary civilization of the farthest antiquity leans forward from Asia to receive the glad tidings of the messenger of freedom. The islands of the Pacific entreat our protection, and at our suit the Empire of Japan breaks down its wall of exclusion.

Our land is not more the recipient of the men of all countries than of their ideas. Annihilate the past of any one leading nation of the world, and our destiny would have been changed. Italy and Spain, in the persons of COLUMBUS and ISABELLA, joined together for the great discovery that opened America to emigration and commerce; France contributed to its independence; the search for the origin of the language we speak carries us to India; our religion is from Palestine; of the hymns sung in our churches, some were first heard in Italy, some in the deserts of Arabia, some on the banks of the Euphrates; our arts come from Greece; our jurisprudence from Rome; our maritime code from Russia; England taught us the system of Representative Government; the noble Republic of the United Provinces bequeathed to us in the world of thought, the great idea of the toleration of all opinions; in the world of action, the prolific principle of federal union. Our country stands, therefore, more than any other as the realization of the unity of the race.

There is one institution so wide in its influence and its connections, that it may already be said to represent the intelligence of universal man. I have reserved to this place a reference to the power, which has obtained

its majestic development within the last fifty years, till it now forms the controlling agency in renovating civilization ; surpassing in the extent and effectiveness of its teachings the lessons of the Academy and of the pulpit. The invisible force of the magnetic ether does not more certainly extend throughout the air and the earth, than the press gives an impulse to the wave of thought, so that it vibrates round the globe. The diversity of nationalities and of governments continues ; the press illustrates the unity of our intellectual world, and constitutes itself the organ of collective humanity.

By the side of the press, the system of free schools, though still very imperfectly developed, has made such progress since it first dawned in Geneva and in parishes of Scotland, that we are authorized to claim it of the future as a universal institution.

The moment we enter upon an enlarged consideration of existence, we may as well believe in beings that are higher than ourselves, as in those that are lower ; nor is it absurd to inquire whether there is a plurality of worlds. Induction warrants the opinion, that the planets and the stars are tenanted or are to be tenanted, by inhabitants endowed with reason ; for though man is but a new comer upon earth, the lower animals had appeared through unnumbered ages, like a long twilight before the day. Some indeed tremulously inquire, how it may be in those distant spheres with regard to redemption ? But the scruple is uncalled for. Since the Mediator is from the beginning, he exists for all intelligent creatures not less than for all time. It is very narrow and contradictory to confine his office to the planet on which we dwell. In other worlds the facts of history may be, or rather, by all the laws of induction, will be different ; but the

essential relations of the finite to the infinite are, and must be, invariable. It is not more certain that the power of gravity extends through the visible universe, than that throughout all time and all space, there is but one mediation between God and created reason.

But leaving aside the question, how far rational life extends, it is certain that on earth the capacity of coming into connection with the infinite is the distinguishing mark of our kind, and proves it to be one. Here, too, is our solace for the indisputable fact, that humanity in its upward course passes through the shadows of death, and over the relics of decay. Its march is strewn with the ruins of formative efforts, that were never crowned with success. How often does the just man suffer, and sometimes suffer most for his brightest virtues ! How often do noblest sacrifices to regenerate a nation seem to have been offered in vain ! How often is the champion of liberty struck down in the battle, and the symbol which he uplifted, trampled under foot ! But what is the life of an individual to that of his country ? Of a state, or a nation, at a given moment, to that of the race ? The just man would cease to be just, if he were not willing to perish for his kind. The scoria that fly from the iron at the stroke of the artisan, show how busily he plies his task ; the clay which is rejected from the potter's wheel, proves the progress of his work ; the chips of marble that are thrown off by the chisel of the sculptor, leave the miracle of beauty to grow under his hand. Nothing is lost. I leave to others the questioning of Infinite power, why the parts are distributed as they are, and not otherwise. Humanity moves on, attended by its glorious company of martyrs. It is our consolation, that their sorrows and persecution and death are encountered in the common cause, and not in vain.

The world is just beginning to take to heart this principle of the unity of the race, and to discover how fully and how beneficently it is fraught with international, political, and social revolutions. Without attempting to unfold what the greater wisdom of coming generations can alone adequately conceive and practically apply, we may observe, that the human mind tends not only toward unity, but UNIVERSALITY.

Infinite truth is never received without some admixture of error, and in the struggle which necessarily ensues between the two, the error constantly undergoes the process of elimination. Investigations are continued without a pause. The explanatory hypothesis, perpetually renewed, receives perpetual correction. Fresh observations detect the fallacies in the former hypothesis; again, mind, acting *a priori*, revises its theory, of which it repeats and multiplies the tests. Thus it proceeds from observation to hypothesis, and from hypothesis to observation, progressively gaining clearer perceptions, and more perfectly mastering its stores of accumulated knowledge by generalizations which approximate nearer and nearer to absolute truth.

With each successive year, a larger number of minds in each separate nationality inquires into man's end and nature; and as truth and the laws of God are unchangeable, the more that engage in their study, the greater will be the harvest. Nor is this all; the nations are drawn to each other as members of one family; and their mutual acquisitions become a common property.

In this manner, truth, as discerned by the mind of man, is constantly recovering its primal lustre, and is steadily making its way toward general acceptance. Not that greater men will appear. Who can

ever embody the high creative imagination of the poet more perfectly than HOMER, or DANTE, or SHAKESPEARE? Who can discern "the ideas" of existences more clearly than PLATO, or be furnished with all the instruments of thought and scientific attainment more completely than ARISTOTLE? To what future artist will beauty be more intimately present, than to PHIDIAS or RAPHAEL? In universality of mind, who will surpass BACON, or LEIBNITZ, or KANT? Indeed, the world may never again see their peers. There are not wanting those who believe, that the more intelligence is diffused, the less will the intelligent be distinguished from one another; that the colossal greatness of individuals implies a general inferiority; just as the solitary tree on the plain alone reaches the fullest development; or as the rock that stands by itself in the wilderness, seems to cast the widest and most grateful shade; in a word, that the day of mediocrity attends the day of general culture. But if wiser men do not arise, there will certainly be more wisdom. The collective man of the future will see further, and see more clearly, than the collective man of to-day, and he will share his superior power of vision and his attainments with every one of his time. Thus it has come to pass, that the child now at school could instruct COLUMBUS respecting the figure of the earth, or NEWTON respecting light, or FRANKLIN on electricity; that the husbandman or the mechanic of a Christian congregation solves questions respecting God and man and man's destiny, which perplexed the most gifted philosophers of ancient Greece.

Finally, as a consequence of the tendency of the race towards unity and universality, the organization of society must more and more conform to the princi-

ple of FREEDOM. This will be the last triumph ; partly because the science of government enters into the sphere of personal interests, and meets resistance from private selfishness ; and partly because society, before it can be constituted aright, must turn its eye upon itself, observe the laws of its own existence, and arrive at the consciousness of its capacities and relations.

The system of political economy may solve the question of the commercial intercourse of nations, by demonstrating that they all are naturally fellow-workers and friends ; but its abandonment of labor to the unmitigated effects of personal competition can never be accepted as the rule for the dealings of man with man. The love for others and for the race is as much a part of human nature as the love of self ; it is a common instinct that man is responsible for man. The heart has its oracles, not less than the reason, and this is one of them. No practicable system of social equality has been brought forward, or it should, and it would have been adopted ; it does not follow that none can be devised, for there is no necessary opposition between handcraft and intelligence ; and the masses themselves will gain the knowledge of their rights, courage to assert them, and self-respect to take nothing less. The good time is coming, when humanity will recognise all members of its family as alike entitled to its care ; when the heartless jargon of over-production in the midst of want will end in a better science of distribution ; when man will dwell with man as with his brother ; when political institutions will rest on the basis of equality and freedom.

But this result must flow from internal activity developed by universal culture ; it cannot be created by the force of exterior philanthropy ; and still less by

the reckless violence of men whose desperate audacity would employ terror as a means to ride on the whirlwind of civil war. Where a permanent reform appears to have been instantaneously effected, it will be found that the happy result was but the sudden plucking of fruit which had slowly ripened. Successful revolutions proceed like all other formative processes from inward germs. The institutions of a people are always the reflection of its heart and its intelligence; and in proportion as these are purified and enlightened, must its public life manifest the dominion of universal reason.

The subtle and irresistible movement of mind, silently but thoroughly correcting opinion and changing society, brings liberty both to the soul and to the world. All the despotisms on earth cannot stay its coming. Every fallacy that man discards is an emancipation; every superstition that is thrown by, is a redeeming from captivity. The tendency towards universality implies necessarily a tendency towards freedom, alike of thought and in action. The faith of the earliest ages was of all others the grossest. Every century of the Christian Church is less corrupt and less in bondage than its predecessor. The sum of spiritual knowledge as well as of liberty is greater, and less mixed with error now, than ever before. The future shall surpass the present. The senseless strife between rationalism and supernaturalism will come to an end; an age of skepticism will not again be called an age of reason; and reason and religion will be found in accord.

In the sphere of politics the Republican Government has long been the aspiration of the wise. "The human race," said DANTE, summing up the experience

of the Middle Age, "is in the best condition, when it has the greatest degree of liberty;" and KANT, in like manner, giving utterance to the last word of Protestantism, declared the republican government to be "the only true civil constitution." Its permanent establishment presupposes meliorating experience and appropriate culture; but the circumstances under which it becomes possible, prevail more and more. Our country is bound to allure the world to freedom by the beauty of its example.

The course of civilization flows on like a mighty river through a boundless valley, calling to the streams from every side to swell its current, which is always growing wider, and deeper, and clearer, as it rolls along. Let us trust ourselves upon its bosom without fear; nay, rather with confidence and joy. Since the progress of the race appears to be the great purpose of Providence, it becomes us all to venerate the future. We must be ready to sacrifice ourselves for our successors, as they in their turn must live for their posterity. We are not to be disheartened, that the intimate connection of humanity renders it impossible for any one portion of the civilized world to be much in advance of all the rest; nor are we to grieve because an unalterable condition of perfection can never be attained. Every thing is in movement, and for the better, except only the fixed eternal law by which the necessity of change is established; or rather except only God, who includes in himself all being, all truth, and all love. The subject of man's thoughts remains the same, but the sum of his acquisitions ever grows with time; so that his last system of philosophy is the best, for it includes every one that went before.

The last political state of the world, likewise, is ever more excellent than the old, for it presents in activity the entire inheritance of truth, fructified by the living mind of a more enlightened generation.

You, BROTHERS, who are joined together for the study of history, receive the lighted torch of civilization from the departing half-century, and hand it along to the next. In fulfilling this glorious office, remember that the principles of justice and sound philosophy are but the inspirations of common sense, and belong of right to all mankind. Carry them forth, therefore, to the whole people; for so only can society build itself up on the imperishable groundwork of universal freedom.

ERRATUM.

Page 27, line 18, for

morals or reason. They who listen to the instructions,
read

morals or reason.

Philosophy, which leaned on Heaven before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.

They who listen to the instructions &c.

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
ON THEIR
SEMI-CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY,

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1854.

NEW YORK:
PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY.

M DCCC LIV.

New York Historical Society.

CELEBRATION

OF THE

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY,

NOVEMBER 20, 1854.

THIS being the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the New York Historical Society, in accordance with previous arrangements the officers and members of the Society assembled at their rooms, in the University of the city of New York, at two o'clock, P. M., where their guests were received and introduced to the President.

At half past two o'clock, the officers and members of the Society, with their guests, proceeded to Niblo's Saloon, where a numerous and brilliant audience already occupied the seats in the house not reserved for the Society. After an overture by the orchestra, under the direction of Mr. Harvey B. Dodworth, the exercises of the day were opened by the President, who made the following remarks :

FELLOW-MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY, AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

Fifty years have rolled their ceaseless tide along the current of Time, since a few enlightened men laid in weakness, but with wise forecast, the foundations of the New York Historical Society. This

institution, through varying fortunes, but with ever-increasing efforts and expanding usefulness, has already reached the close of the first half century of its existence; and we are now assembled to celebrate the first semi-centennial anniversary of its origin. The anniversary address will be delivered by Mr. BANCROFT. The exercises of the occasion will commence with prayer to be offered by the Rev. Dr. DE WITT, first Vice-President of the Society.

PRAYER.

O thou High, and Holy One, who inhabitest eternity, and immensity; Sovereign Ruler and Lord of All, thine is the kingdom, and power, and glory. We bow before thee at thy footstool. While thy throne is founded in justice, and judgment, we thank thee, that polluted and guilty as we are, we may approach thee with humble confidence in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by his gospel. We thank thee for all the mercies of thy Providence which we partake individually, and in our domestic and social relations. We thank thee especially for all thy favors extended to us, and all the blessings poured forth upon the people of these United States. We revert to a little more than two centuries and a half since, when the first colonists came with the open Bible, the open school, and the open sanctuary, and now realize that the "handful of corn" then sown "shakes like Lebanon," and that the "vine thou didst plant when the heathen were cast before it has taken deep root, has spread its branches from sea to sea," bearing fruit which shall be for the healing of the nations. We hold in memory before thy throne our ancestry, the wise men in counsel, and the valiant in the field, and trace their onward course in the struggle for liberty, the attainment of our independence, and the formation of our Constitution under which we have dwelt so quietly and prosperously. We would exclaim, "What hath God wrought?" in view of the wonderful growth of our population, the results of active industry in its various departments, and our national influence which is spreading abroad through the world. May wisdom and knowledge be the stability of our times. May righteousness ever exalt us, and sin never be our reproach. We pray for all in authority, and who are intrusted to bear rule in our national and respective State governments. May they be men fearing God, hating covetousness, and prove a blessing to the people over whom they are placed. Assembled at the jubilee anniversary of the New York Historical Society,

we thank thee for its institution, and the success which has attended it. Grant thy blessing upon it continually, and bless kindred institutions in search of materials to fill up the history of our country. Bless all institutions designed to spread education, mental, moral, and spiritual, and to remove the sins and sufferings of men. Be with us as now assembled, and be with him who has consented to address us, and may we feel that the influence and result of this meeting is to increase our feelings of Christian patriotism and Christian philanthropy. All we ask is in the name of our adored, and precious Redeemer, who has taught us to pray, "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven; give us this day our daily bread; forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, and power, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

The prayer being concluded, the oration was delivered by the Hon. GEORGE BANCROFT. At the conclusion of the oration, which was received with great applause, the Rev. GEORGE W. BETHUNE, D. D., addressed the President as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT:—I shrink from following, with my awkward sentences, the eloquent thoughts and diction to which we have been listening with such pleasure and advantage; but the committee acting for the Society to-day, have just now made it my duty to ask through you, sir, permission to express the thanks of this assembly to the gentleman who has conferred so great a kindness upon us.

It is not necessary to use language for the purpose of telling him our appreciation of his address. The rapt attention with which it has been heard during the hours of its delivery, has testified our sense of its excellence, and I should err in doing more than to move a vote of thanks to our orator.

Yet, Mr. President, I cannot forget the most pleasing fact, that, however ambitious we may have been to secure one, who, on the present occasion, would do us honor, and give us profit by his eminent qualifications, we did not need to go beyond the limits of our own city, or the list of our own members, to find an orator in him, whose magnificent genius has illustrated the annals of our country, and has now taught us how we may act worthily of its citizenship; for when that gentleman returned from representing with equal dignity and diplomatic skill the interests of our government at the first

court in Europe, and not only our government but the educated American mind in its highest accomplishment, he chose our beloved New York as his place of residence, giving to our social circles the welcome presence of a cultivated gentleman, to many of us, a pleasant friend, and to our Society, a faithful collaborator.

With these few words, I have the honor to move you, sir, that the thanks of the Society, and of this audience, be presented to the Hon. Mr. BANCROFT for his address.

The resolution was seconded by the Hon. WILLIAM W. CAMPBELL, and unanimously adopted.

The exercises at the Saloon were concluded by a benediction, pronounced by the Rev. Dr. ADAMS.

The Society, with their guests, then proceeded to the Astor House, where an entertainment had been prepared for them by MESSRS. COLEMAN and STETSON. At six o'clock, Dr. DE WITT having asked a blessing, the company sat down to dinner, which was admirably served. The cloth having been removed, Rev. Dr. MATHEWS returned thanks, and the President introduced the first regular toast, with the following remarks :

To the members and friends of the New York Historical Society, this its first semi-centennial anniversary is one of great interest. In looking back, through the intervening half century, to the origin of the Society, to the early difficulties it had to encounter, and to its progress through those difficulties to its present condition of high prosperity, we find abundant reasons for congratulation and encouragement. In looking forward, from this advanced point of present achievement, to the Future, the horizon of our field of labor becomes enlarged before us, our responsibility increases with our progress, and admonishes us that past success should only serve to stimulate future effort; and that the practical motto of the Society should ever be "to consider nothing as done, while any thing yet remains to be done."

With these preliminary remarks, I have now to propose our first regular toast :

1. THE 20TH NOVEMBER, 1804—the birth-day of the New York Historical Society; rich in its memories of the Past, and in its hopes of the Future, may each return of this Anniversary find the Society more abounding in its means, more active in its operations, and more extended in its usefulness.

This toast having been received with all the honors, the President rose and said :

On an occasion like the present, it is eminently fitting and proper that we should not be unmindful of those to whose enlightened wisdom, public spirit, and personal efforts we are indebted for the origin, the progress, and the present prosperity of this Society. Among these are the names of Egbert Benson, Brockholst Livingston, De Witt Clinton, Samuel Miller, Samuel L. Mitchell, David Hosack, John M. Mason, Charles Wilkes, John Pintard, Peter A. Jay, James Kent, Peter G. Stuyvesant, Albert Gallatin, Samuel Jones, Philip Hone, James G. King, Jonathan M. Wainwright, James Lenox, and other names that not only adorn the annals of this Society, but many of which are high and brilliant on the Records of the History of our State and Country.

I, therefore, ask you to unite with me in honoring our second regular toast :

2. The memory of the Founders and Benefactors of the Society.

A call for Dr. JOHN W. FRANCIS being loudly made, he was received with much enthusiasm. He said :

I wish, Mr. President you had summoned some one more competent than myself. You will at once perceive that I labor under considerable embarrassment, owing to difficulty of speech caused by a severe cold caught a few evenings ago and not properly attended to. Besides, sir, I do not see how it is possible to gather confidence enough for the evening, surrounded as I am with so much loveliness at this end of the room, and so much talent throughout the entire hall. I am, sir, within an atmosphere of intellect. You have had to-day a blaze of it. You have seen the force of it. You have witnessed its incantation, and you know how wonderfully magnificent its influence has been. How then can a farthing rush-light display any demonstration on this occasion? Your toast is one of most copious extent. You have demanded of me that I should say something relative to the commencement of the Society. I hardly know in what manner to take it up: "The Founders and Benefactors of the New York Historical Society." Were I to descant upon but a few of them it would take all night. However, with great deference to the Society and this large assemblage here this evening, I will make a few passing remarks upon some individuals.

No man who lives in New York—no man who has resided in this city within the last twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years, who has heard of the Historical Society, can for one moment doubt that JOHN PINTARD was its founder.—John Pintard was a descendant of that

noble army of Huguenots who fled to this country upon the revocation of the edict of Nantz. He was a native of the city of New York and born May 18, 1759. He studied the elements of general and classical education with the learned Cutting on Long Island ; and afterwards entered Princeton College. His acquisitions were commanding ; and at this early period of his life he studied public men and public measures ; enjoyed the society of the patriotic president of the college, Dr. Witherspoon ; read the letters of Junius in the public papers of the day, and formed a wide circle of learned and distinguished friends. Upon the Declaration of Independence being announced, he left his classical retreat ; and his relative, Elias Boudinot, being appointed Commissary for American prisoners, Pintard was selected for his Secretary. To his range of elegant literature he added some knowledge of the law, and after the triumphs of the revolutionary struggle had been secured, we find him in close employment in the memorable scrip affairs of 1792-93, &c. His interests in these matters proving disastrous, he became a prominent editor in the old Daily Advertiser for several years. He was a rigid Washingtonian in his politics. Resigning his station as editor, we find him at New Orleans, where he examined so minutely the condition of things, that shortly after his return to his native place he published, in 1804, a topographical and medical review of that metropolis. Again settled in this city, he seems to have been industriously and worthily employed in enjoining upon the counsellors of the Municipal Government, the importance of statistical records of Births and Deaths, which was finally adopted by the authorities, and we now possess a series of documentary Reports on that subject, faithfully preserved from 1800, up to the present time. He was appointed the First City Inspector in 1804. But I dare not dwell upon the numerous civic services he rendered this city during his long and industrious life. The First Bank of Savings originated with him. He was conspicuous in the formation of the American Bible Society : he was a main spring in the organization of the Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church : he gave impetus to the revival of the Chamber of Commerce. While a member of our City Corporation and of our State Legislature, so early as 1791-2, when the latter body held its sessions in this city, we find him projecting measures for the improvement of the public affairs of his native place and for incorporating the Bank of New York, the earliest bank in the State. But I have elsewhere already specified most of his useful undertakings of which our people now reap the benefit.

John Pintard was a man of extensive historical, geographical, and above all, didactic information. I hardly speak within the charge of exaggeration, when I affirm that he knew nearly all Dr. Johnson's writings by heart. You could scarcely approach him without having something of Dr. Johnson's thrust on you. He was versed in theological and polemical divinity—Stillingfleet was his idol; of South he was a great admirer, and in the progress of Church affairs among us, he was ever a devoted disciple. He had read with the diligence of a student our historical annals, and in particular our early State history, our Indian and French wars, the story of the Revolutionary contest; the history of the Iroquois, and the confederated Six Nations. He dwelt like Clinton upon that wonderful orator, Red Jacket, and to all these acquisitions he added much knowledge of the glories and resources of the Empire State. Like Cadwallader D. Colden, John Pintard proved an efficient auxiliary in furtherance of the Canal policy of his illustrious and most intimate friend, De Witt Clinton. The first meeting of our citizens in recommendation of this vast measure was brought together through his instrumentality, at a time when to give it any countenance whatever was sure to bring upon the advocate of the ruinous measure the anathemas of certain of the political leaders of those days, and official proscription. I remember well how cautiously and how secretly many of those incipient meetings in favor of the contemplated project were convened; and how the manly bosom of Clinton often throbbed at the agonizing remarks the opposition muttered in his hearing, and the hazard to his personal security which he sometimes encountered. But Pintard, like Clinton, lived to witness the crowning glory of the vast undertaking, and they enjoyed the triumph to their hearts' content at the great celebration in 1824, when the union of the waters of Lake Erie with the Atlantic Ocean was consummated. In the full fruition of the Christian hope, he died June 21st, 1844, in the eighty-sixth year of his age.

When we consider the disasters of his early life in business, by which he lost his patrimony; the incessant toil he bestowed to enable him to support and rear up a large family; his efforts in public calamities and distress, and in periods of pestilence; his individual benefactions to the poor and needy; his generous support to literature,—we are justified in pronouncing him a noble specimen of the patriotic and the humane. On a particular occasion, an unfortunate man, who had suffered the trials of the Jersey prison-ship, addressed, in the presence of Pintard, an affluent individual, for some trifling relief, which was declined: the petitioner turned to Pintard

with like accents, and found succor. "Where do you find authority in Scripture to give alms in your situation?" asked Cræsus of Pintard. "Our people, sir," rejoined Pintard, "know not what American liberty has cost: The example of the Centurion justifies me: 'Thy prayers and thy alms have come up for a memorial before God.'" The formalist was silenced. He often said to his intimate and constant friend, George B. Rapelye, "I shall die my own executor."

There were periods in his life in which he gave every unappropriated moment to philological inquiry, and it was curious to see him ransacking his formidable pile of dictionaries for radicals and synonyms with an earnestness that would have done honor to the most eminent student in the republic of letters. He could tolerate no invasion of his idol, Dr. Johnson. Amidst his most pressing necessities, even in advanced life, his mental energies suffered no detriment; he took a lively interest in affairs, and was exempt from that indifference and sluggishness of mind which too often weigh down the faculties of the aged devoid of intellectual culture. There is a great deal of good picking in the world, he would say, but it is hard to get hold of it. Literary curiosity was the refreshment of his old age: but every physician knows the fact, that in most instances intellectual food is the material to mitigate our sufferings in the decrepit years of life. Books, said the benevolent Pintard, give me a downy pillow.

But I must revert to the Historical Society. Pintard was well acquainted with the valuable labors of the Massachusetts Historical Society. He knew well that New York was equally rich in materials for the services of a similar institution here. He hardly questioned that her patriotism was less than that of that glorious State. He accordingly, after consultation with several of our prominent individuals, recommended the first regular meeting on the 20th of November, 1804, at the old City Hall, in Wall street, and in that room where Washington had been inaugurated the first President of the United States. Egbert Benson, De Witt Clinton, John M. Mason, William Linn, Samuel Miller, David Hosack, John N. Abeel, Samuel Bayard, Peter G. Stuyvesant, Anthony Bleecker, and John Pintard constituted the first meeting. A committee from those present, consisting of Benson, Miller, and Pintard, was appointed to draft a constitution; and the meeting adjourned to meet again on the evening of the 10th of December. At their adjourned meeting the constitution was adopted, and the first meeting convened under it was held on the 14th of January, 1805, when Egbert Benson was elected President, and John Pintard, Recording Secretary.

It can readily be perceived that the Society at its very first inception, could boast of strong men: individuals who had already in their course of life manifested enlightened views, a patriotic spirit, a true love of civic distinction, and talents of superior and efficient excellence; who had studied the annals of their country's struggles, her war of independence, the constitution; and who were alive to the fact that the preservation of contemporary records was the data from which future history was to receive its true impress. The dreadful perversions of facts and opinions about that particular period when the Society was organized, amidst a great political revolution in the general government and in many of the States of the Union, acted as an additional stimulus to hasten the work of conservatism by fidelity in historical research grounded on documentary testimony. Moreover, many of the great minds who had shed their lustre over our annals were either resident among our inhabitants, or engaged in good works in other sections of the Republic. Their very presence admonished the association of the triumphs to be secured by working in the patriotic cause while so many of the actors in our great events were yet among us. BENSON was enriched with constitutional laurels, and had distinguished himself in State legislation and in Congress and on the Bench. His integrity was a proverb. He was, moreover, well impregnated with Indian antiquities, Indian names, and a knowledge of the early Dutch occurrences of New York. Benson was a native of this city—educated in King's, now Columbia College, and died, in 1833, aged 87 years. His historical Memoir is not to be overlooked by the curious in antiquarian research. Of CLINTON, I need only say, that he held for several years the office of President of the Society, that through his whole life he was devoted to its interests, and added to his own and the Society's renown, by his admirable discourses. JOHN M. MASON was distinguished for his noble and fearless bearing, his erudition, his polemical and pulpit writings, and his marvellous eloquence. It may justly be admitted that he was the greatest pulpit orator of his time. Vigor of thought, energy of diction, were his greatest characteristics. He temporized with no errors, if he deemed them such, and his aphoristic diction left a lasting impression on every hearer. In controversy he seems to have adopted Priestley's rule, "a fair field, and no quarter." The warmth of his temperament animated all his discourses; lethargy or indifference found no repose within the sound of his voice, and the multitudes which crowded to hear him was proof of the popularity of his impressive utterance and the force of the mighty truths he promul-

gated. To borrow the language of Grattan, when speaking of Dean Kirwan, "He came to interrupt the repose of the pulpit, and shake one world with the thunder of the other: the preacher's desk became the throne of light." As no obstacles intimidated him, he was ever ready for every good work. I know that his heart was filled with tenderness; that his friendship was most tenacious; and when you heard him speak in laudation of individuals, you were conscious that it was a heartfelt eulogy. The ardent theological discussions in which he so often engaged, and the stern attitude he habitually maintained in regard to popular errors, caused him to be generally considered a man of great hardihood and little susceptibility; but, whoever beheld his eyes (as I have done) fill with tears at the mention of Robert Hall's eloquent services and useful career, would realize that the strength of his understanding was equalled by the tenderness of his heart. We have a beautiful example of his character in his ministrations at the death-bed of the lamented Hamilton, whose last hours were thus solaced by the Christian sympathy of a brave and devoted soldier of the cross.

WILLIAM LINN was an eminent divine of the Dutch Reformed Church, of great pulpit eloquence; rich in American feelings, well laden with historical materials, patriotic in his sentiments, conservative in his principles; and, so far as his professional duties allowed him, gave an impulse to the Society. Of SAMUEL MILLER I might speak at some length. He was a scholar of fair pretensions. His Americanism was indubitable. His leading trait was benignity, and it was no figure of speech which distinguished him from his brother, as the divine Miller; for such he was in character not less than in profession. Intellectually his mind was historical in tendency; his eloquence was singularly persuasive, and his literary acquisitions extensive. His "Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century" marks an era in our literature, and it was justly observed by a British critic, that by this work he had deserved the praises of both hemispheres. So deeply were his sympathies engaged in the objects of this Society, that he contemplated a history of the State of New York, and had collected materials of some extent for that purpose. The records of our Society, and its printed volumes, evince the zeal, ability and devotedness of DAVID HOSACK in the promotion of our great design. This eminent physician, professor, and medical writer, whose long professional career has identified his name with most of the great public institutions of our metropolis, literary and humane, gave much of his time and talents in aid of the great pur-

poses of our incorporation. He justly deemed our association of high value, and his devotion to its interests in the darkest period of its history, is proof of the feelings he cherished in its behalf.

Another valuable recruit to our primitive corps from the ranks of the church was JOHN N. ABEEL, whose high character and large attainments rendered him an important auxiliary. He was also the representative of Dutch feelings, and his name is identified with our colonial history. The first meeting was also favored on that occasion by the presence of a gentleman of public spirit and benevolence from New Jersey, SAMUEL BAYARD, already known as the promoter of the interests of learning in that State. Most appropriately also was the Society's inauguration assisted by a descendant of one of the patriarchs of New Amsterdam, PETER G. STUYVESANT, whose benefactions and character aid in the perpetuation of his ancestor's fame.

Let me detain you with one other name, ANTHONY BLEECKER, a name familiar to New York for many generations. He was educated for the bar, but like many law-students, with the instinct for belles-lettres strongly developed, gave his time chiefly to literature. His taste and a benevolent heart made him a favorite coadjutor in this enterprise. He courted the muses with no inconsiderable success, and was a frequent contributor to the earliest literary journals published in this city. He compiled Captain Riley's narrative, a work in its days, of great popularity, and gave him, I believe, the entire benefit of that publication. Bleecker was of the kindest nature, and remarkable for a generous sympathy for literary merit. Few individuals among us ever equalled him in a devotion to the interests and character of New York. In the vigor of his mental powers he died of a disease of the heart.

I have already stated that at the adjourned session held on the 10th of Dec., 1804, a constitution was adopted. On consulting the records of the Society, it is ascertained that additional persons attended this important meeting; whose names of great renown add honor to the organization of the association. Now we find RUFUS KING, DANIEL D. TOMPKINS, and JOHN HENRY HOBART, among these individuals of whom it were superfluous at this time to utter more than their names: also JOHN BOWDEN, WILLIAM HARRIS, JOHN KEMP, PETER WILSON, JOHN C. KUNZE, all then or subsequently of the Faculty of Columbia College, attesting that that venerable seat of learning sent a powerful deputation for the promotion of the Society. Dr. McVickar, the accomplished Professor of Belles-Lettres, has given us a beautiful tribute to the memory of Bowden, which

every graduate of the College recognizes as justly due his character. HARRIS was a classical scholar of rare proficiency, versed in ecclesiastical history, and who afterwards held for many years the office of President of Columbia College. KEMP, who died at the early age of fifty years, in New York in 1812, was by birth a Scotchman, and is still well remembered by many surviving graduates of Columbia College as an eminent professor in that institution of Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Geography and History. His countenance gave aid to the Society; Professor Renwick has furnished a short memoir of his life in the American Medical and Philosophical Register. WILSON, long a Professor of the Latin and Greek Languages, had much other knowledge to render him an acceptable co-operator. He was notable as a linguist and verbal writer. Dr. William Duer has not forgotten him in his valuable discourse before the St. Nicholas Society. KUNZE was among the most learned divines and oriental scholars of the day; his reading embraced a wide scope of knowledge, and he was something of a proficient in his acquaintance with the Legal Medicine of Paulus Zacchias: but he perhaps will hereafter be most distinctly recognized as the Preceptor of the amiable and accomplished Dr. Stuber, the author of the continuation of the Life of Franklin. We may also notice JOHN MURRAY, Jun., of the Society of Friends; a clever man, a lover of the arts, a philanthropist, and an early and ardent promoter of our Free-School system; and ARCHIBALD BRUCE the first (chronologically speaking) professor of Mineralogy in this country, and the Editor of the American Mineralogical Journal. In Thacher's Medical Biography, I have written of him at greater length.

These facts may be of some interest as referring to the early history of the New York Historical Society; they are related from personal knowledge, although my connection with the Society dates from Miller's masterly discourse in 1809, to which I had the honor and pleasure of listening. I have but briefly indicated as the occasion alone permits the prominent traits of the small band who *first* gathered to form the Society. They are no more: but their work survives, and we gratefully recall their virtues to-night. You will perceive that though few in number, our founders included a rare amount of influence, such as is derived from practical skill in affairs, an enthusiasm for knowledge, high literary attainments, and a patriotic spirit.—You will easily summon to recollection the many eminent men who have subsequently given dignity and interest to our association, and a task more pleasing or grateful could not be undertaken

than a fair record of their character and career did the hour and the occasion tolerate the measure.

3. The President of the United States.
4. The Governor of the State of New-York.

The President, on introducing the fifth toast, said :—

In asking your attention to the subject of our next toast, I take the occasion to state an historical fact of great interest not only to the City of New York, but to the cause of History. It is a fact much less generally known than, from its general interest, it ought to be.

It is doubtless well known to many of you, that the history of the Municipal Government of this city, from its first organization under the Burgomasters and Schepens, down to the year 1831, comprising a period of near two hundred years, and embracing important changes in the Government of the city, the State, and the nation—this history exists only in a single manuscript copy, exposed to destruction by fire, or other accident. This manuscript destroyed, and two centuries of the History of our Municipal Government would become for ever extinct. It would leave behind it no fragments from which that history could be reconstructed. The loss would be entire and irreparable. That the copies of this manuscript history should be, in some way, multiplied, and so disposed of, as to afford a reasonable assurance of their preservation, and the perpetuity of the history, will be readily conceded by all ; and I trust that it may not be unreasonable to hope that a subject of so much interest to the City of New York, and to the truth of History, may receive the early and effectual attention of our City Government.

With these remarks I propose to you our fifth regular toast :—

5. The Mayor and Municipal Government of the City of New York : in the faithful discharge of their high office, they are the guardians of its History, as well as of its character and its welfare.
6. The Army and Navy of the United States : each in its turn, has contributed to the History of our country some of its brightest pages.

HON. FREDERICK P. STANTON, of Tennessee, being called upon, responded as follows :—

GENTLEMEN :—I could not have anticipated the absence of that illustrious citizen of your State, the senior officer of the army of the United States, who was expected to be present and respond to the sentiment just announced. Still less could I have presumed upon

being myself honored with the invitation to respond for the army, in the place of that accomplished and gallant soldier. It is to no merit of my own, and to no personal fitness for the position and the task assigned me, that I can ascribe the compliment implied in your call: it must be only because, upon this interesting occasion, I represent a State whose sons have done something on the field of battle, for the glory of American arms, for the preservation of liberty, and for the inspiration of historic genius.

If, in this unpremeditated attempt to return the acknowledgments of the army for the generous sentiment which has just been received with so much enthusiasm, I could, for the time being, so far elevate myself as to assume the sentiments and feelings which always animate that noble band, I should certainly feel bound to exhibit a becoming modesty in speaking of its glorious deeds. And when I observe the presence in which I stand—the striking array of eminent ability, and established reputation by which I am surrounded; when I reflect that you, like myself, must be impatient for that “feast of reason” which we are soon to enjoy; and, especially, when I know that the navy, kindred in glory and fitly sharing the honor of the sentiment announced, is present to answer in the person of one of its most gallant sons—I feel how appropriate it is for me to say only, in the name of the army, that its privilege is to act, and not to speak—to execute, and not to record its own deeds. It presents to you some of the most important materials of history. Take them: make of them what you can. In your labors the army must ever feel the most intense interest; for it is history, alone, which can erect the monument, “*ære perennius*,” to which the soldier looks as the highest and noblest reward of his labors and sacrifices in the service of his country.

On the other hand, if for myself and in my own personal character, I should feel at liberty to say any thing of the splendid achievements of American arms, scattered as they are on this continent from Bunker Hill to Saratoga and Yorktown, and from New Orleans to Buena Vista, Vera Cruz, and Mexico, it would now be no more than this: that if American historians shall prove equal to their glorious theme, and shall worthily record the deeds of the United States army, they will indeed present to the world, and bequeathe to posterity, the highest possible evidence of their own inspired genius.

Com. J. McKEEVER, in a brief speech, acknowledged the honor conferred upon that branch of the public service to which he belonged, and expressed the hope that the *actions* of the

Navy might always *speak* more eloquently in its behalf, than he possibly could, on that, or any other occasion.

7. The Commanding General of the Army of the United States: whose orders before the battle, have proved to be a true history of the fight.

This toast was received with great enthusiasm, and a note from General Scott was read, which will be found among the correspondence reported by the committee.

The President then gave as the eighth regular toast :—

8. The Orator of the day : in writing the history of his country, he has perpetuated his own.

Mr. BANCROFT rose, and replied as follows :—

Having taken up so much of your time this morning, I have now no right to hold you long ; but my heart leaps to my lips to respond to the cordial manner in which you receive me. The traveller who leaves New York, sees no day so happy as the day of his return. I have every reason to be grateful, that I selected New York for my home ; for where are the greetings of friendship more hearty ? Where are good influences more ready to quicken well-devised designs and stimulate honorable action ? Where do the very eagerness and multiplied variety of activity better encourage by healthful contrast the quiet occupations of the scholar ? The spirit of universal toleration pervades the city, which is most intimately connected with all parts of the world, and is, as it were, the representative of all times and nations. Nature, too, has lavished around us her utmost magnificence ; where the Niagara connects our inland seas, or the Genesee cleaves its way down the mountain-ranges ; or where Lake George reposes among our Highlands, or the Hudson crowns its banks with all that is beautiful in scenery, and all that is lovely and generous and refined in hospitality. If, as students of History, we look back upon the past, this commonwealth traces its rise to the home of modern commerce, industry, and enterprise ; to the chosen asylum of the science and liberal culture which the Reformation fostered. If we call to mind the deeds that distinguish our own soil, faithful history records, how in the revolutionary struggle, this State, in proportion to its numbers, signalized itself by its contributions of its men and of its substance to the common cause. Of all the members of the Union, it had the largest frontier exposed to the desolations of savage inroads ; and all the way from the shore of Cham-

plain to the cabins on the Susquehanna, its sons poured out their blood like water for the sake of freedom and their country. Here were the outposts, over whose inhabitants sorrows thickened like the cloud and burst like the tempest, and here is the battle-field of Saratoga, where victory gave Independence its perfect guarantee. But it is not chiefly on these accounts that the State of New York has gained its high position in the career of humanity. She is emphatically the foster-parent of UNION. The idea of a Federal Union came with the first emigrants from Holland, and ever remained the warm impulse and hope of all their descendants. It was natural for them to desire independence. The Hollander, when once the connection with his own mother country was dissolved, panted for a freer and more prosperous republic than even that of his progenitors, and saw clearly that such a republic could exist in strength, and in varied and expanding culture, only as a cluster of States. Here, therefore, under the influence of geographical position and hereditary wisdom, the first Congress was held in the heart of the Dutch population of New York. Here in this city, Franklin, the great advocate of union, was welcomed with unbounded joy, as he came down our river to report the auspicious plan of a federation. The Constitution of the United States was founded on reason ; and made its way to success by appeals to reason ; and the prevailing appeal was made through the press of New York, especially by its own Jay and Hamilton. Here, too, the great Washington—he, who not only stands foremost in the affections of his country, but lives throughout the world as the representative name of all that is most disinterested and most sincere, inaugurated our Republic, at the very moment when Europe was rocking with the convulsions of revolution, and France was just entering on that course of change which has not yet terminated. I will not offer as a sentiment that our prosperity should be established on a rock ; for geologists tell us that rocks are of comparatively modern origin, and are constantly undergoing the process of decay ; I look for a fit image, to something more enduring, and ask leave to propose :

Our Union : may it last as long as the empire of love and reason.

The President then proceeded to welcome the delegates from the various kindred Societies who were present on the occasion, offering them all the right hand of fellowship, and concluding with the following toast :—

9. Our Sister Societies : co-laborers with us in the cause of historical truth ; we welcome them cordially on this occasion.

The Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, of Massachusetts, as a representative of the oldest Historical Society in the Union, was first called upon to respond to this toast, and his rising was greeted with applause, which indicated what expectations of his eloquence were entertained. He said :—

I need not assure you, Mr. President, that I am deeply sensible to this kind notice and this cordial reception. It is with real pleasure that I have found myself able,—somewhat unexpectedly at the last moment,—to be present on this occasion, to participate in these anniversary festivities as one of your invited guests, and to listen to the comprehensive and powerful discourse of one, in whose fame Massachusetts can claim at least an equal share with New York, and who has just presented so brilliant a title to be recognized afresh as the historian of the whole country.

I feel myself greatly honored, too, in being commissioned as one of the delegates of the Historical Society of Massachusetts, to bear her birthday greetings and congratulations to her sister Society of New York. Your elder sister by a few years, as she is, and by right of seniority the very head of the whole family of American historical associations—she rejoices in every evidence of your superior advantages and ampler resources, and I should do great injustice to those who have sent me, as well as to those by whom I am accompanied, if I did not assure you of the sincere and earnest interest which we all take in the signal manifestation of your prosperity and progress which this occasion has afforded. If I may be pardoned for borrowing an expressive orientalism, and for playing upon it for an instant after I have borrowed it, I would venture to wish that your association might not only flourish like the chosen palm-tree of the plain, but that it might never fail to furnish, to all who repose beneath its shade, an abundant supply of *dates*. For, sir, much as we may sentimentalize about the historic muse, some of my friends at this end of the table, who have courted her ladyship most successfully, will bear witness that she does not feed upon air, but that, on the contrary, she has a voracious appetite for precisely this variety of fruit, and cannot live without it—hard and dry and husky, as it is generally considered by other people.

Sir, the Historical Societies of the different States of the Union—and I am glad to remember that there are now so few States without one—are engaged in a common labor of love and loyalty in gathering up materials for the history of our beloved country. But

each one of them has a peculiar province of interest and of effort in illustrating the history of its own State. And how worthy and how wide a field is thus opened to the labors of your own Society! New York—the truly imperial State of New York—a nation in itself—with a population equal to that of the whole Union in the days of our revolutionary struggle—great in territorial extent—surpassingly rich in every variety of material and of moral resources—unequalled in its external advantages and in its internal improvement of those advantages—greatest of all, perhaps, in its commercial emporium, by every token and by all acknowledgment entitled to the crown, as the Queen City of the Western Hemisphere! What State in the Union is there which combines so many elements of growth and of grandeur! What State, any where, has been so marked and quoted by nature as the abode of enterprise and the seat of empire!

If a stranger from abroad desires to see the beauties or the wonders of American scenery, where else does he betake himself—as my friend, Mr. Bancroft, has just suggested—but along the charming banks of your Hudson, or through the exquisite passes of your Lake George, or up the romantic ravines of your Trenton, or over the lofty peaks of your Catskill, or upon the sublime and matchless brink of your Niagara? If he comes in search of fountains of health, where can he find them so salubrious and invigorating as at your Saratoga, or your Sharon? If he is eager to behold the giant causeways of the new world—those massive chains of intercommunication which have married together the lakes and the ocean, even where hills and mountains would seem to have stood ready to forbid the bans—or the hardly inferior triumphs of that earlier art, which has “rolled obedient rivers through the land;”—where can he behold them on a more gigantic scale, than in your railroads and canals? And, if he is curious to observe the progress which civilization and refinement, and wealth and luxury, and architecture and science and literature, have made among us, where can he witness an ampler or more brilliant display of them all, than in the saloons and libraries, in the shops and warehouses, in the stately edifices and splendid avenues of this magnificent metropolis?

Nor, Mr. President, is New York without the noblest monuments and the most precious memories of the past. The memorable scenes which have illustrated your soil, and the distinguished men who have been actors in those scenes, come thronging so thickly to one's remembrance as he reflects on your past history, that I know not how to discriminate or what to touch upon. Why, sir, we have

a few things to be proud of, in this way, in our own old Massachusetts. Notwithstanding the disparagement which your eloquent orator has just thrown upon rocks in general, as of modern origin, I think I may say that we have a Rock which no one will disparage, which has been trodden by the noblest company of men and women that ever braved the perils of a wintry sea, or stemmed the currents of an adverse fortune. We have a Hall, too, which has echoed to as noble voices as ever pleaded the cause of human rights. We have a Hill, also, and a Plain, not unknown to fame—represented at this table, I am glad to say, by one of my excellent colleagues (Rev. Geo. E. Ellis)—where the first blood for independence was poured out like water from some of the purest veins of our land. We have names, too, both in our later and our earlier history, which we would not willingly admit to be second to any which can be found on the historic roll. But no inordinate appreciation of our own treasures has rendered us insensible, I trust, to the proud associations and memories which are the priceless inheritance of our sister States. We rejoice to remember that they all have something to be proud of—some principle which they were first in asserting, some idea which they were foremost in advancing, some proposal which they were earliest in advocating, some great American event of which their soil was the chosen scene, some great American character to which their institutions gave birth.

Yes, sir, each one of the old Thirteen at least,—and not a few of the new Eighteen, also,—can point this day to some one or more of the memorable names or deeds or associations of our history, and say: "This is our own—this is our contribution to the glories of America—this institution was the work of our fathers, or this soul was ripened beneath our sky." Virginia, the mother of us all, with her Jamestown and her Yorktown, the Alpha and the Omega, the small beginning and the glorious close, of our colonial career,—and with her transcendent and incomparable Washington,—I wish I could find a title worthy of that name;—Rhode Island and Maryland, with their Roger Williams and their Calverts, contending nobly together for the earliest assertion of religious toleration;—Connecticut, with her Charter Oak;—Pennsylvania, with her pure-hearted and philanthropic old Broad-brim Proprietor, and with her Hall of Independence, and her grave of Franklin;—New Jersey, with her Trenton and Morristown;—North Carolina, with her Mecklenburg and her Nathaniel Macon;—South Carolina, with her high-souled Huguenots, and her Marions and Sumpters;—Georgia, with her be-

nevolent and chivalrous Oglethorpe :—Why, sir, one might run over the whole catalogue of the States, even to the youngest and latest of them, without finding one that is not associated with some name, some story, some event, of a nature not merely to quicken the pulse and gratify the pride of her own people, but to attract the sympathy and kindle the patriotism of every true-hearted American citizen. These stars of our political system, sir, like those of the firmament above us, differ indeed from one another, but only in glory.

“Facies non omnibus una,
Nec diversa tamen ; qualem decet esse sororum.”

But second to no one of them, certainly, in all that constitutes the interest and the pride of history, stands NEW YORK—with her gallant English explorer, Henry Hudson, whose fate was even sadder than that of the lamented navigator of the same land, whom your own Grinnell has so nobly, but alas ! so vainly, sought to succor ;—with her sturdy old Dutch settlers and Dutch governors, whose virtues and valor, as well as their peculiarities and oddities, have been immortalized by your own delightful Irving ;—and with her later heroes and patriots, of civil and of military renown, her Livingstons and Clintons, her Philip Schuyler and Alexander Hamilton, her Kents and Gallatins, her John Jay and Rufus King—if, indeed, Massachusetts can allow you to appropriate the fame of Rufus King. We need not quarrel, however, about that, sir—for his fame is wide enough for us both. May his memory ever be a bond of friendship and love between us ! And if it ever fails to be, I doubt not that Maine, which furnished his birth-place, will be quite ready to step in and settle the difference.

Who can forget, too, that it was upon your soil, at Albany, just a hundred years ago, that Benjamin Franklin submitted the first formal proposition for a union of the colonies ? Who can forget that it was upon your soil, at Saratoga, that the first decisive victory over the British forces was achieved,—that victory which gave the earliest emphatic assurance to the world, that the liberties of America would, in the end, be triumphantly vindicated ? Or, who can forget, that it was upon your own soil, in this very city, that the Constitution of the United States—the grand consummation of all the toils, and trials, and sacrifices, and sufferings of patriots and pilgrims alike,—was first organized ;—and that the very air we breathe has vibrated to the voice of Washington, as he repeated the oath to

support that Constitution from the lips of your own Chancellor Livingston?

No wonder, sir, that your Society is so eagerly and intently engaged in illustrating the history of your own State, when you have such a history, so noble and so varied, to illustrate.

But, Mr. President, let me not draw to a close without remarking, that none of us should be unmindful that there is another work going on, in this our day and generation, beside that of writing the history of our fathers,—and that is, *the acting of our own history*. We cannot live, sir, upon the glories of the past. Historic memories, however precious or however inspiring, will not sustain our institutions or preserve our liberties.

There is a future history to be composed, to which every State, and every citizen of every State, at this hour, and at every hour, is contributing materials. And the generous rivalry of our societies, and of their respective States, as to which shall furnish the most brilliant record of the past, must not be permitted to render us regardless of a yet nobler rivalry, in which it becomes us all even more ardently and more ambitiously to engage.

I know not of a grander spectacle which the world could furnish, than that of the multiplied States of this mighty Union contending with each other, in a friendly and fraternal competition, which should add the brightest page to the future history of our common country, which should perform the most signal acts of philanthropy or patriotism, which should exhibit the best example of free institutions well and wisely administered, which should present to the imitation of mankind the purest and most perfect picture of well-regulated liberty, which should furnish the most complete illustration of the success of that great Republican Experiment, of which our land has been providentially selected as the stage.

Ah, sir, if the one-and-thirty proud Commonwealths which are now ranged beneath a single banner, from ocean to ocean, could be roused up to such an emulation as this,—if instead of being seen striving for some miserable political mastery, or some selfish, sectional ascendancy,—if instead of nourishing and cherishing a spirit of mutual jealousy and hate, while struggling to aggrandize themselves, whether territorially or commercially, at each other's expense, or to each other's injury,—if they could be seen laboring always, side by side, to improve their own condition and character, to elevate their own standard of purity and virtue, to abolish their own abuses, to reform their own institutions, peculiar or otherwise, and to show

forth within themselves the best fruits of civilization, Christianity and freedom,—what a history would there be to be written hereafter for the instruction and encouragement of mankind! Who would not envy the writer whose privilege it should be to set forth such a record?

Surely, sir, he would realize something of the inspiration of the Psalmist: "His heart would be inditing a good matter, and his tongue would be the pen of a ready writer." It would be no subject for any cold and sneering skeptic, however glowing his style, or polished his periods. No Gibbon could tell the story of such a rise and progress. Such a mind may deal better with "the decline and fall" of nations. Methinks, Mr. President, it would be a theme to inspire fresh faith in him by whom it was treated, and in all by whom it was read,—faith in the capability of man for self-government, faith in human progress and in Divine providence, faith in the ultimate prevalence of that Gospel of Christ, which is, after all, the only sure instrument either of social or of political reform.

But let us, at least, not fail to remember on such an occasion as this, that whatever be the history which we, in our turn, are to present to the world, and which we are now acting in the sight of men and of angels,—that whatever be the scenes which the daily daguerreotypes of a thousand presses are catching up and collecting for its materials—such a history is to be written;—and, when written, it is to exert an influence upon the world, for good or for evil, for encouragement or for warning, such as no other uninspired history has ever yet exerted. Yes, Mr. President, it is not too much to say that American history, the history of these United States, and the history of these separate States, is to be the fountain to mankind of such a hope—or of such a despair—as they have never yet conceived of.

Not for any mere glorification of men or of States; not to magnify the importance of individuals, or to trace the antiquity of families; not to gratify the vanity of monarchs, or ministers, or yet of masses, is our history to be written;—but to exhibit the true and actual workings of the great machinery of free government, and to show how well, and to what results, the people are capable of managing it. This is to be the great lesson of our annals. This is the momentous problem, whose solution we are to unfold—and the world can look for that solution nowhere else than here.

You have all observed, I am sure, that the accomplished Lieutenant Maury has been gathering up the old log-books of the mer-

chant ships and whalers, and comparing them together to make wind charts and current charts, for rendering your ocean voyages more speedy and more safe. Just so will it be with the log-books of our great Republic, and of the lesser republics which are sailing beneath the same flag. From them is hereafter to be made up the great sailing Chart of Freedom, which is to point out the safe channel or the fatal reef to every nation which shall enter on the same great voyage of liberty. God grant that on no corner or margin of that chart may ever appear the sad record: "Here, upon this sunken ledge, or there upon those open breakers, or yonder, in some fatal fog, by the desertion of some cowardly crew, or the rashness of some reckless helmsman, our great New Era struck, foundered, and went to pieces"—to the exultation of despots, and to the perpetual consternation and despair of the lovers of freedom throughout the world. Let that chart rather, I pray Heaven, bear down to a thousand generations the plain and unmistakable track of an ever smoother and more prosperous progress, giving hope and trust and confidence and assurance to all who shall launch out upon the same sea, that a safe and glorious voyage is before them, a safe and glorious haven within reach.

Thus far, certainly, Mr. President, there has been no lack of speed in our own course. We are advancing rapidly enough, no man will deny, to no second place among the nations of the earth. What other country beneath the sun has ever exhibited so vast an extension of its territory, its population, its power, within the same period of its existence? I saw an official announcement, a few days since, that one of the astronomers at our National Observatory, in looking at the *thirteenth* asteroid of that fragmentary system which was once thought to be composed of only four or five inferior planets, found suddenly a strange visitor within the field of his telescope, which proved to be the *thirty-first* asteroid of that same mysterious system. It was a fact not a little emblematic of our own national history.

While the historic observer of America has been turning his glass and fixing his gaze upon our Old Thirteen, he has suddenly seen the system increasing and multiplying beneath his view, until the thirty-first star has already appeared in the same marvellous constellation. The war with Mexico,—of which the gallant hero is your fellow-citizen, whose absence at this board has just been so much regretted,—in adding this thirty-first star to our flag, has opened to us the vast mineral treasures of the Pacific coast;—and as Congress

was bestowing upon the veteran victor the commemorative medal which he so well deserved, but which was so meagre a memorial of his merits, we could not but recall the noble lines of a great English poet—

“In living medals see our wars enrolled,
And vanquished realms supply recording gold!”

But this is but of yesterday. If we would realize the rapidity of our country's progress, we must go a little farther back. We must go back to the beginning of that very half century over which the existence of your Society has now extended. Fifty years ago! What was our country then?—what is it now? Look on that picture and on this! Ohio but just admitted, with a single representative in the national councils. Louisiana just annexed, most of it a bare, untenanted, unexplored wilderness. Not a steamboat on the Hudson, or any where else except in the brain of some scheming Fitch or hare-brained Fulton. Not a railroad or a telegraph within twenty years of being dreamed of. The cotton crop still in its infancy. New York hardly yet one of the great States; for you will remember that Virginia and Pennsylvania and Massachusetts were the three great States of the revolutionary and constitutional periods. By the constitutional apportionment, Virginia had ten representatives, and Massachusetts and Pennsylvania eight each, while New York was allowed but six. Sir, we must look on this picture of our country, and then upon that presented in the statistics of the census just completed, if we would appreciate in any degree the railroad rapidity, I had almost said the lightning-line velocity, of our national career.

And where, where is it all to end? That, sir, is to be written hereafter. But let us not forget that, in part, at least, it is to be decided now. It requires no ghost to tell us, no second-sight or spiritual communication to assure us, that if we are true to ourselves, true to the principles and examples of our fathers, and true to the institutions which they founded, our country may go forward, with the blessing of God, to higher and higher degrees of prosperity and power in safety and in peace; its destiny ever written in the motto of its greatest state—*Excelsior*—EXCELSIOR! While if we are faithless to our trust,—if, lulled into a false security by long-continued and uninterrupted success, we suffer the public vigilance to be relaxed, and the public virtue to be corrupted—or, if dizzied by the rapid whirl of our career, and yielding to the rash impulses of the hour, we per-

mit our country to be dragged to the verge, and even plunged into the vortex of domestic discord or foreign strife,—it may be even our own ignoble and ignominious distinction, in some volume of history to be written at no distant day,—that we helped to make shipwreck of the noblest bark that was ever launched on the tide of time.

Sir, I beg pardon for detaining you so long. Let me only sum up all that I have said, and all that I feel in the concluding sentiment :—

The State of New York:—Upon her soil the first formal proposition of *Union* was made; upon her soil the first victory which gave assurance of *Liberty* was won; upon her soil the *Constitution* of the United States was originally organized. May history record that her example and her influence were always given to the support of *Union*, *Liberty*, and the *Constitution* !

Mr. WINTHROP resumed his seat amid enthusiastic applause, and his complimentary sentiment was received with all the honors.

The Hon. JOHN CADWALLADER responded for the Pennsylvania Historical Society, and gave as a sentiment :—

The ANCIENT DOMINION, and her historical representative here to-night.

Prof. GEORGE TUCKER, formerly of the University of Virginia, responded for the American Philosophical Society. He said :—

MR. PRESIDENT,—After the wisdom and eloquence to which we have listened this day, I feel unwilling to trespass on your time. I did not know until a few minutes before I took my seat at this table that I was expected to represent the Philosophical Society of Pennsylvania. Another gentleman, Judge Kane,* was appointed to discharge that office, and before I left Philadelphia, I was told he certainly would attend. Under these circumstances, I can do little more than express our kind feelings towards the society over which you preside, and our congratulations on its extraordinary success, as I understood from you this morning, that it now consists of twelve hundred members. Mr. President, it has often been a matter of wonder to me, that a State which has achieved so much as New York, should have produced no recent history of her progress, especially as she is almost as pre-eminent over her sister States, in letters as in

* The father of the gallant officer, whose generous enterprise in search of Sir John Franklin now fills America and Europe with anxious interest.

commerce. In three departments, in humor, in poetry, and in fiction, she can boast of three sons,* who, perhaps, have no equals in American literature. Probably your writers have been deterred by the success of the great Knickerbocker, from making the attempt, but the events since his day are of still greater interest than those he has so ably chronicled. Long after he wrote, the great canal brought the commerce of the lakes to this city, and Fulton gave steam navigation to the world. The history of your political parties, too, presents a theme equally curious, copious, and instructive. There have been your Hamiltonians and Burrites, your Clintonians and adherents of Van Buren—your old Hunkers and Barnburners, your Hards and your Softs, your Silver Greys and your Know Nothings, by which New York politicians mystify Europe, and bewilder the citizens of other States. The history of your great State invites the efforts of her most gifted sons. But let me, in their behalf, invoke the aid of the booksellers, who render the same service to authors as merchants do to farmers, by finding them a market. But they have strong inducements to reprint European books which cost them nothing rather than to pay for American works. I am anxious to see this bounty on the works of foreign authors removed; but until it is removed by the national legislature, let me appeal to their patriotism and ask those who have enriched themselves by reprinting European productions to use the means they so amply possess to cherish American literature. I know that much has already been done in this way, but they may do more; and though at first they may make less money, they would by a liberal outlay at present sow the seed from which they would reap a rich future harvest. They would moreover have the gratifying consciousness of encouraging that class of domestic products of which every nation is most justly proud, and they would, moreover, thus escape the taunts of their transatlantic rivals. Mr. President, allow me to tell you a story; I promise you it shall not be a long one.

In those days when piracy on the high seas was more common than at present, one who had been very successful in this line having been smitten by a fair damsel, married her, and under her influence, quitted his roving life, bought a fine house, furnished it in suitable style, and in no long time gave dinners and parties, and became one of the leaders of fashion. Even his frank, sailor-like manners had their admirers and imitators. In the midst of this new greatness, one who had been an officer under him made him a visit. The lieu-

* It is scarcely necessary to say that Irving, Bryant, and Cooper are here adverted to.

tenant was invited to dinner, but no one, I imagine, was invited to meet him. In the afternoon, as they sat regaling themselves with gin twist, their favorite beverage, said the guest, "Captain, don't you sometimes wish yourself again in the Salamander, scouring the seas, one day ankle deep in blood, and the next wallowing in gold?" "Those were glorious times to be sure," said the other, "money does not come in now as fast as it did then, and as to blood, I seldom see it, except when I cut myself in shaving—but after all, Ben, I don't know but that the life of a gentleman is as happy as that of a pirate, and it is a damned deal more respected."

Allow me then, Mr. President, to offer the following toast:—

"The speedy adoption of an international copyright."

10. An enlightened and independent Judiciary: the strongest bulwark of Liberty and Order.

Judge WILLIAM W. CAMPBELL responded:—

MR. PRESIDENT,—Another and a better man should have responded to this toast. Since I came here to-night, your wishes have been communicated to me, and in all matters connected with the Historical Society, my obedience is due and is cheerfully yielded. I am to speak for the profession to which I belong, and which without vanity may be said to have acted no inferior part in the world's history.

Eight hundred years ago, the first Chief Justice of England wrapping his priestly garments over his coat of mail, celebrated Mass, and then mounting his charger, with baton in hand, led on the Norman Cavalry on the field of Hastings. A half a century afterwards the foundations of Westminster Hall were laid. The court was transferred from the *aula regis* to its own chosen and independent home. The judicial ermine, though it might sometimes cover the sword of state, seldom, if ever, covered again the sword of battle, and from that time down through all the ages of English and American judicial history, the men who have been called upon to administer the laws, with a few unamiable exceptions, have generally been found in the ranks of those contending for freedom and the right. He whose name and memory every American lawyer delights to honor and to cherish, who more than any other man illustrated judicially the Constitution of the United States, who was emphatically the great Chief Justice, combined in himself the soldier and statesman, the historian and the judge. Commencing his career as a sub-

altern in the first Virginia regiment, afterwards a member of the House of Burgesses of his native State—the author of the life of Washington—member of the Senate of the United States—foreign minister—and for more than a quarter of a century Chief Justice—John Marshall did all things well, and justly has become a great subject of history.

The judges and lawyers led on the American Revolution. They drew up those great state papers which issued from the old Continental Congress, and which challenged the admiration of even the enemies of the country.

In later days Story and Kent have shed new lustre on the learning of the law, and have made the names of American judges familiar wherever the English and American common law finds a home on the earth. Chancellor Kent was an early friend and active member and president of this society, and it is but fitting on this occasion that a passing tribute should be paid to his memory. New York was the State where he was born, and was the theatre of his labors, and where he achieved his judicial greatness. Never had the State a truer son. The past history, and the present commanding position of the State were topics on which he delighted to discourse. It was my good fortune to make his acquaintance soon after I came to this city, many years ago, a stranger youth, and from that time down to the close of his life I was permitted to share somewhat of his confidence and his friendship. He was familiar with the entire range of the political and judicial history of the State, and his conversation was enriched with the stores of varied learning. He was pre-eminently one of the great champions of liberty and order to which your toast refers.

Mr. President, the year 1804, the year of the formation of this Historical Society, was memorable in the legal annals of New York. Hamilton fell, Thomas Addis Emmet landed in our city, John Wells by a great effort at the bar took his place in the front rank of American lawyers, and James Kent became the Chief Justice of the State. Spencer and Van Ness and Platt were about that time entering on their judicial careers. They are all gone. The stars which formed that splendid galaxy have all set. Their learning, patriotism, and fearless independence of character remain for our imitation. Like the Trojan youth, we may follow on, *haud æquis passibus*. On occasions like the present, as we bring up in brief review the virtues and the services of the great and the good who have gone before us, these memories of the past sweep over us like the music of

Ossian—"sweet and mournful to the soul." The pen of the historian must embalm them for the benefit of future generations.

The eleventh regular toast was as follows :—

11. A well-conducted Press : the efficient agent of civilization.

Mr. WILLIAM C. BRYANT was called by the President to answer this toast, and said :—

In behalf of the conductors of the press, I thank the company for the kind manner in which this toast has been received. Between the newspaper press and historical societies there is a natural consanguinity. Newspapers are the chroniclers of the day. The sheets which their conductors issue are like the Sibylline leaves, cast on the four winds, dispersed, and sure to be lost but for the care of historical societies, which collect, reposit, preserve them. There they are found by the historian, who examines, selects, combines the materials they supply him, connects them into a series, a system, extracts their philosophy, their divine essence, and gives them as oracles to all nations and ages.

But, Mr. President, I will not weary those who listen to me with a long comment on a toast. On an anniversary like this, which looks back to the fourth year of the present century, it seems to me that it is well to remember those who, at an earlier period of our existence as a nation, set themselves to study and compile its history. A distinguished gentleman of the eastern States has this evening addressed us as the representative of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Several years before your institution had an existence, the hand of the founder of the Massachusetts Historical Society—Dr. Belknap, the historian—had traced its last lines, and he slept with Herodotus and Xenophon. I remember his "American Biography" among my earliest reading ; it consists of accounts of personages whose names are distinguished in the annals of our country, and is written with a simplicity engaging to persons of all ages. Greatly as he has since been surpassed in historical research, in philosophy and narrative skill, by his countrymen of the present time—of which we have a shining example in the great historian who has so eloquently addressed us to-day—he has the high merit of being the first to make American history attractive. Sixty-two years ago he published "The Foresters," long a favorite at New England firesides. In this work the story of Virginia is pleasantly shadowed out in the adventures of Walter Pipeweed—that of Massachusetts in the for-

tunes of John Codline ; New York figures as Peter Bullfrog ; Connecticut is personated by Humphrey Ploughshare, South Carolina by Charles Indigo, and the quarrel between Mr. Bull, the clothier, and his refractory apprentices, who had established themselves in the forest, closes with a quit claim from Mr. Bull, renouncing all title to the lands on which they had settled. On this festive occasion the mention of a work which sought to embellish our history with the charms of wit and humor, I trust, will not be deemed out of place, although, in these respects, its fame has been eclipsed by the inimitable writings of our own Diedrich Knickerbocker, whose memory at the next semi-centennial anniversary will, I am certain, be as fresh as it is to-day.

Let me close by a toast :—

Dr. Belknap and his Associates : the founders of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

12. Popular Education : the great Interest of a Free People, and indispensable to the continued existence of free government.

President KING of Columbia College said :—

Called upon to speak to the toast just given, I cannot refuse to bear my testimony to the value and indispensableness of "popular education."

It is the forming agency which moulds at will the individual man, the social man, and the political man, and which, therefore, more than all other agencies, determines the character alike of men and their institutions.

When, then, we speak of "popular education" we speak of the greatest known power over human actions and their results. But all is not education which is so called—nor indeed are the ends aimed at by popular education the same in all countries, any more than the means of imparting it are the same.

There is no more universal, nor in the sense in which it is given, more thorough popular education than in Austria, but that education, popular though it be, includes no hint that the people should have any part in public affairs, or in the control of the government. Letters, science, art, all throughout the wide domain are taught, but nothing of human rights, nor of popular sovereignty, nor of the power of majorities. All other subjects of human inquiry may be investigated with the utmost freedom and to the widest extent ; but the political domain is a closed field ; there no inquiry, no discussion of any sort is permitted.

Popular education with us is just the reverse ; with less of art, less of science, less even of letters than are taught in the Austrian public schools ; we found our system upon the equal rights of all ; upon the capacity of the people for self-government, and upon their exclusive and inalienable right to such government.

And each scheme produces its designed effect. Austria educates intelligent, quiet, obedient subjects. We educate a restless, questioning generation of citizens, which takes nothing for granted, nothing for settled, and which especially claims and exercises the right to make and unmake its laws and government at its own good pleasure. I make this brief and rapid comparison to illustrate education as a *power* that moulds men and nations at will, and thence to infer the importance, the vital importance, in our land of giving to education its proper aims and aids.

All admit its necessity, all feel its want. It is the instinct of our common humanity, groping in darkness after better and brighter things, to pray for light. The strong, brave man of Homer's glorious epic, contending under a cloud of darkness against adverse fate, exclaiming, "Give us but light, and Ajax asks no more !" is the type of all strong, brave natures, as yet shrouded in the darkness and delusions of ignorance ; and striving upward and onward for light ! light ! light !

Education, gentlemen, is that light ; wide-spread popular education. It has that choicest quality of mercy, "it is twice blest, it blesseth him that gives and him that takes ; it is mightiest in the mightiest." If the one, in the language of our great bard, "becomes the throned monarch better than his crown," so the other does equally become the enthroned people as investing them with the crown immortal and imperishable ; of knowledge taught and used in the love and the fear of God. For, gentlemen, in the Book of Truth there is no more certain and solemn truth than that "in the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." I dare hardly think of how little our system of popular education is founded on this great truth.

How few comparatively of the more enlightened and wealthy of our people seem to be duly impressed with the immense interest that belongs to common-school education, which for four out of five of our population is all the education they ever receive. It is in our "common schools that the nation receives its character." It has been well said that "mothers and schoolmasters sow the seeds either of anarchy, tyranny, or liberty, for the strength and destiny of any

community lies in the virtue and intelligence of its younger members." But this would lead us into long digression, and this is not a fitting occasion to develop such fruitful and significant topics, but I could not, in such a presence as this, allude at all to popular education without expressing my conviction as to its only safe, abiding, and enduring corner-stone, the knowledge, the love, and the fear of God.

Assembled, as here we are, to commemorate the half-century anniversary of the *Historical Society*, it seems natural to revert to the state of things as to popular education existing in our city at the time of the organization of this Society, and to compare it with what now exists.

In 1804, when the Historical Society had its birth, no common-school instruction was known in New York.

It was not till the year 1805 that the *New York Public School Society* was incorporated under the name of the "Free School Society," and it is not without interest to add, that one of the most active and influential persons in organizing the *Historical Society*, was also very active and influential in aiding the incorporation of the *Free School Society*, DE WITT CLINTON. The association was a natural one, for History is one of the Muses—and all the Nine co-operate in the education of man—though it belongs to Clio alone to preserve the records of their acts and thoughts.

And especially must popular education and such an association as this, whose honored birthday we are celebrating, act and react upon each other and grow, each by the growth of the other; and so measurably it is now. The *Historical Society*, feeble at its commencement, and long feeling obscurely its way along; slow in growth like the oak and all things destined to endure, has now revealed itself in grand proportions, as a successful collector and conservator of precious archives, as the founder of a valuable library, and as the centre of a large circle of educated and distinguished men. In like manner, during the same time, the free schools from nothing have risen, in this city alone, to two hundred and twenty-five in number, and the aggregate of those taught therein during the last year exceeds one hundred and twenty-three thousand.

This has not been without cost, large cost—I am almost tempted to say, I wish it were larger, for all that is saved in education is in reality lost to country and to God. What nobler use, indeed, can be made of the wealth with which the labor and industry and intelligent enterprise of our country are crowned, than that a liberal share

of it be devoted to the spread of sound knowledge? In a mere utilitarian sense, indeed, as a question of expediency, of mere profit and loss, it may be shown that wealth is actually rendered at once more secure and more productive by the means it dispenses to improve, to refine and to restrain—in one word, to educate a whole people. In proportion as we find in our tax-books a large figure in the column for education, will that in the column for eleemosynary and penal institutions be diminished, and all the more certainly as that education shall truly rest upon the corner-stone already indicated.

Without detaining this company by further remarks, I ask leave to sum up in a toast what seems to me the relation of this Society to popular education :—

The Public Schools of New York : the nursery of those who are to contribute to its future history.

13. Woman : although last in our toasts, yet ever first in our affections.

THEODORE E. TOMLINSON, Esq., responded as follows :—

“ Woman,” if first in our affections, should not be last in our toasts. She has fallen into my arms and I will uphold her with all the chivalry of the feudal ages. Woman is a theme worthy the poet or orator. Did not Homer the blind bard sing of woman, and when we read of Hector bearing thick battle on his sounding shield, or holding aloft young Astyanax trembling at his nodding plume, do we not revert to beauteous Helen—sad Andromache?

Did not our orator historian to-day, from whose hand the centuries seemed to fly,—did he not pause to play celestial music to woman, did he not say that of all things beautiful of earth, the veil of her spirit was most beautiful, that in our briery life she was the lily, or — I forget, for the flowers were all emulous ; the gentle daisy lifted up its head, the violet breathed a newer fragrance, and the rose angrily blushed woman's pride, and woman's loveliness. She is greater than the historian ; he but records the past, she makes history ; her gentle hand bends the twig that gives inclination to the oak ; on the infant brow, she stamps the character of the nation. It was only when luxury crept into the domestic circle, and stained the fireside, when there were no Spartan mothers, no Roman matrons, that Rome and Sparta fell.

Woman is the type of civilization, in savage life a slave, in refined a queen ! What distinguishes this nation most, what impresses the noble of other lands that the “ American ” is the more

delicate, the higher refinement, is our veneration for woman. She can go unharmed all through our vast country, her guardian angel the spirit of the people. I cannot read the future, the horizon is obscured, the firmament is not clear. Who can tell what will grow out of the conflicts of the old world, and the anxieties of the new?—This I believe, that as long as the American people preserve their respect for woman, and respect follows worth, the American Republic will live. This I know, that if the mothers of the nation are good and pure, the sons of the nation will be strong and free.

Woman! Empire is in thy hand. Lead forth from beyond the mountains, from the far Pacific, out of the virgin bosom of the peerless West, the Young States, and they will come to our Union, as mighty as our own, without a canker to consume their youth, without a cloud to darken their destiny.

Power in arms, or song, or eloquence, has made man immortal. His very origin enshrined the muse of Milton. Woman's is greater than his. Man was made of the dust of earth, woman out of the image of God. She is supreme in good or evil. Did not Cleopatra lead captive conquerors? Who but Eve could have destroyed Paradise, where day was ecstatic joy, and night came as the approach of gentle music, where the couch was the fragrant embrace of flowers, where the rich, luscious grape fell without the wooing—where the very mountains arose in their sublimity to extend their shade over man's repose? Though the chosen "angel" of the "destroyer," still her name is stamped on the decalogue, "Honor thy father and thy *mother*."

What eloquence so exquisite as Ruth's "thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God?"

In song who more impassioned than Sappho—in prophecy who more inspiring than Miriam, with harp and timbrel by the shores of the sounding sea?

Her destiny overshadows man's; his fate trembles in hers. Napoleon tore from its heaven his morning star, Josephine, and St. Helena, in retribution, arose in the ocean.

Did not Mary, the mother of Washington, fashion his great mind, and breathe her stainless purity into his greater heart?

More eloquent than tongue can tell, more glorious than pen can write, are the simple words, mother, daughter, sister, wife! "Mother!" how sweet from the lips of the gleeful girl, how holy from the trembling voice of age! To the dying captive, to the bleeding soldier, to the great man, to the malefactor on the scaffold, thy name "mother" comes radiant with the light of young Eden days!

"Wife" is thy better self; "sister," thy loveliest peer; "daughter," sunshine dancing on thy knee.

In heathen mythology Jove was the parent of wisdom—that sprang a goddess all create from his immortal mind. In Christian religion, the Virgin was the mother of our Lord!

Woman has ever been divine—with the ancients the symbol of plenty, of beauty, of purity, and wisdom—Minerva all perfect, Ceres with her sheaf of wheat, Diana with her bended bow, Venus arising from the crowning foam of the great sea. With us of the New Testament she has been chosen as wife and daughter for the expression of miracle—at the marriage feast when the water blushed to wine, and when he bade the daughter of Jairus arise and walk. "Faith, Hope, and Charity abideth" most in her who touched but the hem of his garment and was made whole, and in the widow who, with her mite, gave most to her Lord.

Yes, woman is divine. How many orisons ascend to thee, Virgin Mary! Woman is divine even in her fall. Do you not remember that our holy Lord bowed to the earth, wrote upon the sand, and would not look up to her shame, her degradation, or her punishment!

The regular toasts having been given, at the conclusion of the response to the last, the Secretary of the Committee of Arrangements presented their report on correspondence, including a letter from EDWARD EVERETT. His letter will be found among the extracts from the correspondence printed with this report.

The President thereupon rose and said:—

Notwithstanding the distinguished gentleman, whose interesting communication to us has just been read, is unexpectedly absent from our festival this evening, yet this Society has been too often and too greatly indebted to this gifted son of New England, for high gratification and instruction, to allow this occasion to pass without a grateful recollection and notice of him in our present festivities. I therefore ask you to unite with me in drinking to the health of

EDWARD EVERETT,—Whether in the pursuits of Literature, in the labors of the Senate, or the higher duties of the Cabinet, he has been alike distinguished in all.

Rev. SAMUEL OSGOOD being called upon, rose to speak to the following sentiment:—

"E Pluribus Unum,—the memorial motto of the past; the prophetic motto of the future."

Mr. Osgoon began by speaking of the office of a nation's memory in quickening a nation's hope; he maintained that the past, instead of being a dead thing, is the enduring root of the future; and, if we destroy memory, her daughter, hope, will not long survive. He illustrated the worth of history in bringing the records of national achievements to bear upon national enterprise. With us, the muse of history was no wrinkled crone, dwelling among the dust of sepulchres, but a radiant creature, ever young with liberty and hope.

He then spoke of our national motto, "E Pluribus Unum," as representing our holiest remembrance and our fairest hope. The colonial history of the provinces illustrates how it was that the many towns and settlements became one under the influence of a common country, a common conflict, and a common constitution,—how marvellously elements so various were harmonized into one organic system. It was equally remarkable, that when the many became one, the unity did not destroy the natural and healthy diversity in the constituent parts, and the *many* kept their independence and vitality in the *one*. He compared the American people, under one President, with the French nation, which, in 1804, the year this Society was established, consolidated its conflicting elements under an Emperor's rule, and the liberty of the many was enslaved to the will of the one. In our country, the separate States retained their old individual characteristics after being brought together under the Federal Constitution. Massachusetts was Massachusetts still, and New York was New York before and after the Union. These faces about this social board show the old Knickerbocker feature as in the days of old Stuyvesant; and if you wish to know how Massachusetts keeps her characteristics look thither at Winthrop, and read in that face two centuries and a quarter of the Old Bay State's history, as, in an authentic copy of the Puritan Governor's handsome face, true now as ever to the stamp, an honest man's nature.

Mr. Osgoon went on to show the union of free individuality with national organization, especially during the last half century, notwithstanding the apparently alienating tendency of distance between States, differences between parties and sections, and the conflicts between the foreign manners of our millions of immigrants with the old nationality of our land. He spoke of the power of the locomotive engine which was first used in 1804 in neutralizing distance; he then illustrated the power of party differences in developing indi-

vidual freedom, and paid an especial tribute to the independence of our minorities in spite of the dominion of the majority. He touched upon the feud between North and South, and defended the largest liberty of speech as quite compatible with our Union. He closed with remarking upon the power of our American nationality in assimilating our foreign population, and declared that our stomach was big and strong enough to digest the Irish and the Germans into sound American blood in spite of themselves. The greenest sprig of Erin could not be long on our soil without catching something of its flavor. If Paddy once got into the hopper of our national mill he would stand a fair chance of coming out ere long minus his shillelah and whiskey bottle, although he might, perhaps, still keep hold of his rosary.

He gave as a sentiment :—

The America of the Future, the loyal child of Old America. One nation of many independent States ; many independent States of many free minds.

Rev. Dr. BETHUNE was loudly called for, and with evident reluctance rose to say, that, having already obeyed the wishes of the Society in speaking at their place of assemblage in the afternoon, he should have been excused from saying any thing more, as it had not been his intention, and was not now his wish.

The Doctor then sat down ; but, on being pressed to go on, he said :—

The praise of history has been the theme to-day ; yet, since you insist on my speaking, let me ask, What is History ? Its uncertainty has been painfully felt by us all ; but never, perhaps, so much as of late, since the new school, of which Niebuhr, and Heeren, and Arnold, and Grote are eminent members, has cast doubt upon all the records of the early past, turning into myths all that was once flogged into us respecting the founders of Athens and Rome. Theseus and Cecrops are visionary creatures, like those that seem to look out upon us from the misty shadows of retreating night ; and even the wolf-nurse of the first twin-Romans, whose thunder-scarred image still inhabits the Capitol on the Seven Hills, represents a fable no more worthy of credit than a nursery story. Following the same rules of trying evidence, how much may be myth and how much fact in our own received annals ! Who ever saw Brother Jonathan ? or Uncle Sam ? or Yankee Doodle ? Plymouth Rock, noble as its

legend is, may be nothing more than a myth to represent the rugged and immovable virtue which underlies the cultivated excellence of New England character. Nay, I have sometimes thought, when looking at the grave visages which conceal the warm cordiality of our New England brethren, that they have never recovered from the chill of the bleak, sleety December day when the legend says they landed at Plymouth. With these doubts on my mind respecting history, I should say no more about it; but, as a New Yorker born and bred, I am moved by more grave feeling; for, while I look around me on this pleasant company, and am glad to recognise many friends whose birth-places are elsewhere, I miss the faces of not a few whom it was our happiness to see gathered on similar occasions in former years. I need not name them,—I dare not,—for I could not utter the words without too much emotion; and the New Yorkers who hear me need not to be reminded of the dead, who, if now living, would be exulting among us in the prosperity of our Society. But how few, among the many here, are genuine, born New Yorkers! How soon we who remain must follow them into the eternal future! How dear to us is the memory of the departed! We go back to the scenes of childhood and boyhood, when our strongest friendships were formed, and the ties which have made life most happy were first thrown about us. Let me ask: Is there a man here who ever ran down Flattenberg? (Yes! Yes! Yes! cried a score of voices), or skated on Lisenard's Meadows? (Yes! Yes! Yes!) or Burr's Pond, or Stuyvesant's Pond? (Yes! Yes! Yes!) Then, my friends, old friends, true born New Yorkers of no recent day, I greet you well, and say, with a full heart, God bless you! But let us remember our birth-place not without a sense of our filial responsibility; and hold ourselves bound so to live and act, that we may do all in our power to advance the honor and glory of our native city.

REV. DR. S. K. LOTHROP of Boston, being next called upon, responded to the call in a brief speech, concluding with the following sentiment:—

The States of this Union. What is peculiar in each of them derives all its value, its efficacy, and its power, from that which is common to all of them—their UNION.

The President in proposing the following volunteer toast, said:—

Three of the earliest and most distinguished members of our Society are absent from our festival this evening. These cherished names are so associated in our early intercourse, are so united in our admiration of their literary productions, and the many excellencies of their character, that I will not separate them in the toast I am about to propose, and to which, I am sure, you will cordially respond.

I ask you, then, to unite with me in drinking to the health of

WASHINGTON IRVING, JAMES K. PAULDING, and GULIAN C. VERPLANCE, names dear to New York as they are to this Society.

JAMES W. GERARD, Esq., being called upon, made some appropriate remarks, and concluded with the following sentiment:—

The Present Age—the Age of Iron.

The President presenting the following volunteer toasts, said:—

Our festival to-night is graced by the presence of one, who, if he be not a frequent attendant at the meetings of our Society, is always a welcome one. His literary productions, while they do honor to himself, shed a lustre upon the character of his country. I ask you, then, to unite in doing honor to his name in drinking to the health of

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT, the Poet of Nature, and *the* Poet of our Country.

We very unexpectedly miss from this joyous occasion one whose presence among us was once as familiar as it was always welcome and exhilarating. His was a sunny and genial nature; and, in the cordiality and charm of his intercourse, he won our hearts, and kept them too. He was a jewel lent us by Connecticut, but which, as in many other cases, she has reclaimed to herself.

I ask you then with me to renew our recollection of this former and cherished friend by drinking to the health of

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK,

“One of the few, the immortal names,
That were not born to die.”

The President then retired, and the chair was taken by FREDERIC DE PEYSTER, Esq., First Vice-President of the Society.

Col. SCHOULER of Cincinnati, being called upon, responded briefly, giving as a toast :—

Our Country, and Union for the sake of the Union.

JOSEPH BLUNT, Esq., rose and said :—

MR. PRESIDENT :—Such anniversaries as we now celebrate are apt to make us take a retrospective view of the intervening period, and serve to mark, in a peculiar manner, the progress of mankind. At the time when this Society was first established, a war was commencing in Europe, which eventually brought in as parties the whole of the civilized world.

The fiftieth anniversary of this Society witnesses the commencement of hostilities of equally portentous character. It is deeply interesting to mark the change of the tone and principles adopted by the belligerents of this day as compared with those of the former period, and especially towards this country.

In 1804, the doctrine of perpetual allegiance on the part of a subject towards the sovereign in whose dominions he was born, was generally accepted as a part of European law ; and one of the parties to the contest at that day claimed the services of her subjects in such a moment, without reference to the country they had adopted or the length of their residence abroad. In enforcing this claim by impressment from American vessels, it often happened that native citizens of the United States were taken and compelled to perform military service under a foreign flag. With the view of preventing this abuse, the American Minister in London, at the inception of hostilities, had arranged a treaty with the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, prohibiting impressment from American vessels at sea ; but Lord St. Vincent, who was at the head of the Admiralty, insisting on the narrow seas being excluded from this arrangement, Mr. King wisely determined to leave the matter to the decision of time rather than seemingly to acquiesce in the assertion of a principle so monstrous and indefensible. Before one half of the intervening period had elapsed, this claim of impressment from American vessels was for ever abandoned. Thirty years ago it was tauntingly asked by the Edinburgh Review, Who reads an American book ? Even at that early day, the country whose mouth-piece it was had read the book where was recorded the determination that impressment from under the American flag had for ever ceased ; and the gallant Ingraham,

when he avowed his resolve, in the harbor of Smyrna, to vindicate the right of a naturalized citizen against the claim of perpetual allegiance on the part of the Austrian Emperor, only gave utterance to the general feeling of the public mind at home, and exemplified the striking contrast between the present day and the hour that witnessed the attack on the Chesapeake.

No less remarkable is the difference between the code of maritime warfare put forth at this time and that adopted at the commencement of the former combat. Assuming the colonial system to be part of the established state of the world, England then determined to prevent neutrals from engaging in the trade between Europe and American colonies, from which they were ordinarily excluded; and, under the pretence that credit was given on duties payable at the custom houses here, the products of the tropics were seized in American vessels bound to Europe from the United States, and condemned, although proven to be American property, and regularly exported from the United States.

Now the belligerent parties at the commencement of the war avow their intention not to act upon those principles, that were then deemed essential to the successful prosecution of the contest. We hear of no powerful fleets sent out, to compel nations to disavow the principles of a confederacy armed to vindicate neutral rights.

On the contrary, both parties profess their determination to respect neutral rights, and to exercise their belligerent powers with the least possible inconvenience to those not engaged in the war. This avowal is made not as a concession to neutral remonstrances, nor as the result of a long and tedious negotiation. It is put forth in advance of discussion, and to calm the public mind of Christendom as to the scope of belligerent action upon the commerce of the world.

The colonial system, with all its pretensions to monopolize the resources and control the trade of one hemisphere for the benefit of another, has almost disappeared; and seems about to be absorbed in that gulf of oblivion, which has swallowed up the sovereignty of the narrow seas and the divine right of kings. It is a matter of no inconsiderable pride to us, as citizens of a free republic, that this change in public law has been in entire accordance with the views and principles of those patriotic and far-seeing men who established our political institutions.

They seemed to aim in their foreign, as well as in their domestic policy, to advance such principles as should secure the greatest happiness to the greatest number. No exclusive privileges, either in spiritual or temporal affairs, found an abiding place in their system.

Hence the unexampled growth of the United States.

Without an army, unless that name be given to those few regiments that are hardly sufficient to furnish an armed police for this extensive country; with a navy scarcely large enough to enforce our revenue laws, this country has, during the existence of this society, taken the first rank among civilized nations, and without assuming a military attitude has enforced her claims and maintained her principles among the powers of the earth.

The imposing spectacle of a modern empire, with her military fortresses and naval outposts scattered over the surface of the globe, and saluting the rising sun with a continuous strain of the martial airs of England, is well calculated to make a strong impression of her power and sway.

My mind, however, is as much, if not more, impressed at the quiet attitude of this republic,—with a common boundary extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific, unstudded by forts or citadels, and throughout that long extent, scarcely a flag “flouting the air” in rivalry with that of a power whose grasp encircles the earth.

Secure and unprotected by any outward display of military force, she is rapidly subduing the wilderness, developing the resources of the continent, and building up an empire of unrivalled strength. The woodman’s axe and the blacksmith’s hammer are the instruments to develop her growth, and yet, like the majestic and intelligent elephant, she possesses in the implements that furnish her subsistence an engine of power, from which the more ferocious animals shrink in conscious dismay.

Much of this strength is owing to the obvious moderation and justice of her political principles. The success of her government, and the acceptance of her maxims in national law, is mainly due to their conformity to justice and truth. While the American government shapes its course under their guidance, no other government can withstand its career. Its moral power must prove an overmatch for their mere physical force.

When it throws off its allegiance to those great principles, it becomes a Samson shorn of his strength.

Permit me to propose as a sentiment,—

Public Opinion: the monarch of modern society—let courtiers remember that honor is due to those who speak truth to Kings.

The toast next offered was,—

The Thirty-one Stewards.

WORTHINGTON ROMAINE, Esq., being called upon, said :—

MR. PRESIDENT—Our Chairman's absence accounts for this kindness, especially as Secretaries, from their keeping of minutes, are supposed to be acquainted with what has been going on.

In responding, I must be short, as the hour is late. Well, sir, the Committee of Stewards met and organized. One acquainted with the members on the list will readily perceive, politically speaking, a curious admixture; namely—Democrats, both Hard Shells and Softs—Whigs, Silver Grays, with all the other kinds, and so on.

A strong disposition was evinced on the part of many, who were new in their position, to ascertain their peculiar duties; but the secret must out, no one could be prevailed upon to give them that desirable information. Thus *every thing*, down to the tasting supper, was carried by the Know-Nothings. Of this quiet party I shall say no more for the present.

The coincidence of our own number agreeing with that of the States induced us (modestly, of course) to resolve ourselves into a Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union, but only for this occasion. *We* were, therefore, to take care of the representatives who had been invited. Every thing was prepared.

And now, sir, our treat at banquet board, we trust no usual one, has, I hope, been enjoyed by all here. Thirteen, or Thirty-one, we love the old as well as new, and all *alike*.

Mr. President, you know New Yorkers well enough to feel that the estimate of them contained in the History of our State, by Mr. Brodhead, now with us, sir, is not too high a one. Justly proud, as so many must be, of such a birth-place, what heart so cold that warms not with the burning words and noble themes that tonight have met our ears. All here must love their native soil, yet each seems willing to acknowledge the other as his own. Let, sir, those States who have them, show to such others as have them not, that Historical Societies can, from the embers of the past, preserve many live coals wherewith to cheer our very hearth-stones; that they can *teach* us how to offer, upon the sacred altar at home, a sacrifice whose incense shall meet an approval not only here but from above. In such a view, allow me to give you, as applicable to both the present and the future, this sentiment :—

May our Historical Societies exert their influence in cementing a Union that should only cease with time itself.

A motion to adjourn was passed shortly after twelve o'clock.

The following list embraces the names of the guests present, including delegates from the several Societies represented on this occasion; viz. :—

JOHN W. FRANCIS.	GEORGE BANCROFT.
JAMES M. MATHEWS.	CHARLES KING.
JOHN W. MULLIGAN.	WILLIAM C. BRYANT.
J. G. KOHL.	SAMUEL OSGOOD.
FREDERIC P. STANTON.	JOHN LORD.
WILLIAM ADAMS.	GEORGE W. GREENE.

From the Maine Historical Society.

JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.	NEHEMIAH CLEVELAND.
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From the Massachusetts Historical Society.

ROBERT C. WINTHROP.	GEORGE E. ELLIS.
SAMUEL K. LOTHROP.	WILLIAM P. LUNT.

From the Connecticut Historical Society.

HENRY BARNARD.	CHARLES HOSMER.
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From the New Jersey Historical Society.

WILLIAM A. WHITEHEAD.

From the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

JOHN CADWALLADER.

From the American Antiquarian Society.

STEPHEN SALISBURY.

From the American Philosophical Society.

GEORGE TUCKER.

Committee of Reception.

ALEXANDER H. STEVENS.	JOSEPH FOWLER.
HARVEY P. PEET.	AMHERST WIGHT.
LAMBERT SUYDAM.	THOMAS SUFFERN.
JAMES PHALEN.	ALEXANDER W. BRADFORD.
CALEB O. HALSTED.	BENSON J. LOSSING.
P. S. VAN PELT.	TIMOTHY HEDGES.
PETER COOPER.	JAMES F. DE PEYSTER.
HENRY E. DAVIES.	JOHN L. MASON.
JOEL T. HEADLEY.	GERARD STUYVESANT.
BENJAMIN W. BONNEY.	CHARLES P. KIRKLAND.

EXTRACTS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

1. From Dr. T. ROMEYN BECK, dated Albany, October 19, 1854, regretting his inability to attend:—

“Being a member of the New York Historical Society of nearly forty years’ standing, I can properly appreciate its services in the cause of American Literature.”

2. From Hon. JAMES K. PAULDING, dated Hyde Park, Dutchess County, October 19, 1854, acknowledging receipt of the invitation of the Committee:—

“This proof of their kind remembrance is deeply felt by one who has been so long out of sight that he could not complain had he been entirely forgotten by his old friends.

“It would afford me great pleasure to attend your celebration; but the distance of my residence from New York, though it may be travelled in a few hours, renders the journey fatiguing to one of my age and habits, and I trust you will accept this as a sufficient apology for respectfully declining your invitation.

“I have not been inattentive to the labors of the Society, especially for the last few years, and am fully sensible of the importance of its objects, as well as the zeal and ability with which they have been pursued; and, though I have taken no part in these labors, my best wishes for their success have always attended them. None of us will probably live to see another “Semi-centennial Anniversary,” but, I trust, it will be celebrated by successors equally zealous and equally successful in collecting and preserving those memorials of our early history, which time will only make more interesting and honorable.”

3. From the Hon. WILLIAM A. DIER, dated Inglewood, near Morristown, N. J., October 20, 1854, accepting the invitation of the Committee.

4. From Sir HENRY ELLIS, dated British Museum, October 22, 1854, regretting his inability to be present at the celebration:—

“I should have been very happy to have heard a eulogistic address from my kind friend the Hon. George Bancroft, who well knows the points to which the aim of your Historical Society should be pointed; and with whose brilliantly impressive powers in eloquence I am not unacquainted.”

5. From Dr. JOHN W. FRANCOIS, dated New York, October 23, 1854, accepting the invitation of the Committee.

6. From the Hon. ROBERT C. WINTHROP, dated Boston, October 23, 1854, accepting the invitation of the Committee.

7. From Lord CAMPBELL, dated London, October 25, 1854, expressing his gratification with the invitation, which he is unable to accept.

8. From the Hon. JARED SPARKS, LL.D., dated Cambridge, October 25, 1854, fearing that his engagements at the time will not permit him to be present.

9. From WASHINGTON IRVING, dated Sunnyside, October 26, 1854, accepting the invitation of the Committee.

10. From Sir EDMUND W. HEAD, Bart., Governor-General of Canada. &c., &c., dated Washington, October 27, 1854, regretting that he cannot avail himself of the invitation of the Committee.

11. From Rev. JAMES M. MATHEWS, dated New York, October 31, 1854, accepting the invitation of the Committee.

12. From the Hon. JAMES BUCHANAN, dated London, October 31, 1854, acknowledging the communication of the Committee.

13. From the Hon. JOHN LAW, dated Evansville, Indiana, October 30, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

14. From the Hon. HERSCHELL V. JOHNSON, Governor of Georgia, dated Executive Department, Milledgeville, Ga., October 30, 1854, regretting his inability to be present, and transmitting a donation to the library—the “Historical Collections of Georgia” and the “Statistics of Georgia,” by the Rev. George White.

15. From the Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD, dated Auburn, October 31, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

16. From the Hon. J. A. MATTESON, Governor of Illinois, dated Springfield, October 31, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

17. From the Hon. WILLIAM B. LAWRENCE, dated Newport, R. I., November 1, 1854, accepting the invitation of the Committee.

18. From the Rev. WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM, D.D., dated New College, Edinburgh, November 7, 1854 :—

“It is impossible that I can accept of the invitation because of my ordinary imperative occupations at this season. But I joyfully embrace the opportunity of assuring you of the deep interest I take in the history of the United States, of the conviction I entertain that the last half century of your country’s history has been one of progress unexampled in the history of the world, and of my sincere desire that the next half century of your history may, through the Divine blessing, prove at least equally auspicious.”

19. From GEORGE GROTE, Esq., dated London, November 2, 1854, regretting his inability to be present, and wishing “all success and prosperity” to the Society.

20. From CHARLES B. TREGO, Esq., Secretary of the American Philosophical Society, dated Philadelphia, November 4, 1854, communicating their acceptance of the invitation to send a delegate from that Society.

21. From the Hon. JOHN P. KENNEDY, dated Baltimore, November 4, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

22. From the Hon. CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, dated Quincy, November 5, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

23. From THOMAS BIDDLE, Jr., Secretary of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, dated Philadelphia, November 5, 1854, communicating their acceptance of the invitation to send a delegate from that Society.

24. From WILLIAM A. WHITEHEAD, Esq., Corresponding Secretary of the New Jersey Historical Society, dated Newark, November 8, 1854, communicating their acceptance of the invitation to send a delegate from that Society.

25. From WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS, Esq., dated Charleston, November 9, 1854:—

“Your noble institution has always had my hearty sympathies, as well because of its component merit as because of the objects contemplated in its organization. It would give me great pleasure to join with your *reunion*, and share the pleasant festivities which it promises; but I am sorry to say that my domestic interests and necessities will fetter me at home this winter, and I can only tender you a warm assurance, from a distance, that I shall be with you in spirit, as truly hopeful as any present, of the good and grateful results which such a gathering promises for the history and literature of the country. In such a region as ours, where the material interests of the city are perpetually demanding and compelling consideration over all others, it is peculiarly well and fortunate that there are some few minds willing to go apart from the great masses, and concentrate their energies and talents, at stated periods, to the higher objects of humanity. You can effect much in your province for the development of the true civilization, which is something much rarer and nobler than a people can ever attain by the consideration only of the vulgarly useful. That such is your object I feel assured; that you will attain it, I fervently desire and believe. You have noble minds at work, and generous spirits, eager in the prosecution of toils, which survive all the common purposes of society, and elevate and purge the society, which a too excessive regard to the material must always, in the end, degrade. I cheerfully and gratefully send my feeble voice over the tract which separates us, that it may swell, in however small degree, those echoes in the popular mind and heart which it is your desire to awaken, and make permanent and powerful voices in the land. That you may succeed in this virtuously ambitious purpose is my earnest desire.”

26. From the Hon. WILLIAM A. GRAHAM, dated Hillsborough, N. C., November 13, 1854, regretting his inability to be present:—

“Considering the situation of your Society, its acquisitions in the first half century of its existence, and, may I add, the characters of the men who compose it, it possesses advantages for exploring and elucidating the subjects of history, unequalled, perhaps, by those of any similar institution

in America. Like the commerce of the great city in which it holds its seat, it is destined, from the intimate relations of the States, and the facilities it enjoys for literary and intellectual communication, to extend the range of its investigations far beyond the mere memorials of local history in the State of New York, abounding as that does in aboriginal traditions; the legends of the Dutch Colonies; the conquest and consequent domination of Britain; the Indian, the Ante-Revolutionary, Revolutionary, and Post-Revolutionary Wars, which have rendered so many of its localities classical ground in the annals of the nation; and the progress of a fourth or fifth-rate member of the Confederacy, at the Declaration of Independence, to an empire of three millions of freemen, filled every where with the monuments of a high civilization. But when and long before these engrossing topics shall be exhausted, the erudite researches of your Association will shed their light on whatever is interesting in the developments, social, civil, religious, political, or natural, in the land of Raleigh and the Roanoke, the Huguenots and Santee, De Soto and the Father of Waters, and the new Anglo-American domains on the Rio Grande and the Pacific.

"I can imagine no studies more elevating and ennobling to their votaries—more fruitful in patriotic and humanizing results—more promotive of veneration and affection for the union of the States—and no field of history, ancient or modern, half so full of attraction and interest.

"Accept, gentlemen, my congratulations on the past, and my best wishes for the success of the future labors of your Society."

27. From the Hon. HENRY BARNARD, President of the Connecticut Historical Society, dated Hartford, November 14, 1854, communicating their acceptance of the invitation to send a delegate from that Society.

28. From the Hon. STEPHEN SALISBURY, President of the American Antiquarian Society, dated Worcester, November 14, 1854, communicating their acceptance of the invitation to send a delegate from that Society.

29. From the Hon. RICHARD RUSH, dated Sydenham, near Philadelphia, November 14, 1854:—

"The large and enlightened objects of your Society are set forth in the terms of your invitation, and few are uninformed of the good results of its operations during the half-century of its existence. This Cycle of Time is memorable for the prodigious strides made within it towards the material and intellectual advancement of mankind. I am of those who remember the admirable discourse to your body, pronounced by your eminent citizen and fellow-member, De Witt Clinton, whose early efforts in alliance with those of Gouverneur Morris, your Coldens, your Livingstons, your Schuylers, and others, for opening upon a grand scale the resources of your State, formed, by its noble example of bold yet wise enterprise to other States of the confederacy, an epoch in American prosperity and power. It made absolutely a point in our public history by its speedy consequences, perhaps more important than any other after the Revolution and the adoption of the Federal Constitution. I am of those also who remember the general joy felt when the genius of Fulton achieved its first immortal triumphs, *de facto*, before the world, by ascending the Hudson to Albany by steam, in defiance of wind and tide. He did this certainly under New York auspices, and, if I do not mistake, encouraged and incited by individuals of your public spirited Society. Nor must I forget that superb and imposing aquatic procession, when the Governor of your State

poured water into the Atlantic brought from the lakes, in your first Erie canal-boat, to commemorate, by a spectacle of appropriate grandeur, the completion—after long predictions that it would not be completed—of that great work of internal navigation—the greatest then known to any part of the United States. And well did it merit so gorgeous a commemoration, amidst the shouts of thousands and thousands, the roar of artillery, and all other demonstrations of public rejoicing; for never did the intermingling of waters produce results more beneficial to whole communities of men.

“To have been invited to the coming semi-centennial festival of a Society whose annals can recount so many names, past and present, known to historical and other renown, and which has put in motion and helped to put in motion deeds of public utility and magnitude, is an honor of which I am gratefully sensible. In expressing this feeling, I am compelled to add, with unfeigned regret, that obstacles I am unable to overcome take from me the gratification of being personally present on an occasion so full of interest.”

30. From J. K. TEFFT, Esq., Corresponding Secretary of the Georgia Historical Society, dated Savannah, November 14, 1854, communicating their acceptance of the invitation to send a delegate from that Society.

31. From HON. DANIEL D. BARNARD, dated Albany, November 14, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

32. From GEORGE S. HILLARD, Esq., dated Boston, Nov. 14, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

33. From Major-General WINFIELD SCOTT, dated New York, November 15, 1854:—

“Having lost the day of your celebration, I was about to answer your flattering note affirmatively; but, pausing for inquiry, I am to meet the Secretary of War at Washington the same day—Monday next, at twelve o'clock.

“I very much regret the interference of this engagement, for I am anxious to cultivate intimate relations with the New York Historical Society, and its approaching celebration cannot fail to be highly interesting.”

34. From the Chevalier HULSEMANN, Austrian Chargé d’Affaires, dated Washington City, November 15, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

35. From JOSEPH W. MOULTON, Esq., dated November 16, 1854, accepting the invitation of the Committee.

36. From Señor DON FELIPE MOLINA, Minister Plenipotentiary from Central American States, dated Washington, November 16, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

37. From the HON. HENRY DUTTON, Governor of Connecticut, dated New Haven, November 17, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

38. From WILLIAM B. REED, Esq., dated Philadelphia, November 17, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

39. From HENRY R. SCHOOLCRAFT, Esq., dated Washington, November

17, 1854, regretting his inability to be present, and communicating the following sentiments:—

"HISTORICAL SOCIETIES IN AMERICA: While they are the true aids of useful letters and popular knowledge, holding high the lamp of research, the healing oil which supplies the flame derives none of its brilliancy from party strifes.

"DE WITT CLINTON: One of the early and efficient friends and founders of the New York Historical Society; a man who was great in whatever sphere he moved. Whether as a scholar, a public economist, or a statesman, he shed a brilliant light on the path he trod. His heart beat in unison with all the best humanities of life. He lived to fulfil the highest duties of a citizen, and a public benefactor; and has left his name to the State, as one of her most honored and treasured legacies."

40. From the Hon. EDWARD EVERETT, dated Boston, November 17, 1854:—

"I was favored a short time since, with your official invitation to attend the Anniversary Festival of the New York Historical Society. I have also had the honor to be named as a member of the delegation of the Massachusetts Historical Society, appointed to be present on behalf of that body on this pleasing occasion.

"It would afford me the greatest pleasure were it in my power to attend a celebration of so much interest and importance. The desire of hearing the discourse of your President is almost too strong to be resisted. Other inducements make the occasion one of unusual attraction; but domestic circumstances prevent my leaving home.

"The half-century which has elapsed since the organization of your Society, has been filled every where, and nowhere more than in New York, with great events and great names. When your Association was founded, the State of New York, with a population at the last preceding census short of six hundred thousand, was the third in a Union of seventeen States. She is now, with a population of more than three millions at the last census, by far the largest member of a Union of thirty-one States. With the increase of population there has been an increase of agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial wealth which defies estimate; a multiplication almost unlimited of all the noble institutions of religion, education, philanthropy, and general culture, which gives so much of its efficiency to our modern civilization.

"Your own imperial city with Brooklyn, numbered in 1800 but sixty-four thousand inhabitants; the two cities cannot, I suppose, now count less than ten or eleven times that number. Besides this, your vast metropolis, look at the interior:

"*Adde tot egregias urbes, operumque laborem
Tot congesta manu præruptis oppida saxis,
Fluminaque insuetos subter labentia muros.*"

And then the great men who have passed some portion at least of the last half-century on the stage of life, who have founded or promoted, achieved or adorned this marvellous progress; men like Hamilton, who organized the public credit; like Jay, who conducted the foreign affairs of the country at the most critical period of its existence, and never wrote a line that needed to be qualified or unsaid; like Clinton, who solemnized that great union of the waters, and Morris, his fervid and efficient co-operator; like Fulton, who first, within your limits, subdued the winds and the waves to the mastery of steam; like Cooper, the great American novelist; like

Kent and Wheaton, who, in the two great departments of legal science, the municipal and the public law, have enriched the literature of their country with works of standard excellence, and taken their place among the teachers of mankind.

"With respect to two of the names mentioned, Clinton and Fulton, when we consider, in reference to the former, the grandeur of the conception of making New York the outlet of the great lakes—the difficulties to be overcome in the state of engineering at that time—the limited financial resources then at command—with the absolutely inappreciable local utility of the enterprise; and when, in the case of Fulton, we contemplate the mighty influence of his achievements upon all the arts of locomotion—the almost total revolution in commercial and military navigation to which it is leading, I scarce know where in the history of discovery and invention we can find brighter names.

"Nor have you less to boast of in the studies which more immediately belong to an historical society. No great branch of literature has been so successfully cultivated in America as history; and I believe that even European criticism, not over partial to merit on this side of the Atlantic, will bear me out when I say, that in addition to many works of sterling value, which I have no room here to name, America has within twenty-five years, produced three historians, whose works will go down to the latest posterity with those that have already stood the test of ages. I am not more confident of the abiding reputation of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon—of Livy, Sallust, and Tacitus—of Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Hallam, and Macaulay, than I am of the abiding reputation of Irving, Prescott, and Bancroft. I believe their works will be read till the English language is forgotten.

"I rejoice to be able to add that, while they belong assuredly not merely to the country, but to the world, our two States may claim the more immediate property in them, in nearly equal shares. The author of the "Life of Columbus," by birth and residence is wholly yours; the author of "Ferdinand and Isabella," in the same sense, is wholly ours; while the Historian of the United States has divided himself pretty fairly between us;—and, to prevent either of us from being too proud of our share, runs away from us both in the summer."

41. From Lient. Col. J. J. ABERCROMBIE, U. S. A., dated Fort Columbus, November 17, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

42. From JAMES LENOX, Esq., dated New York, November 18, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

43. From E. B. O'CALLAGHAN, Esq., dated Albany, November 18, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

44. From Prof. SAMUEL JACKSON, dated Philadelphia, November 18, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

45. From the Hon. JAMES SAVAGE, dated Boston, November 18, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

46. From Señor Don JUAN N. ALMONTE, Minister from Mexico, dated Washington, Nov. 18, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

47. From the Hon. CHARLES SUMNER, dated Boston, November 19, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

48. From JOHN F. CRAMPTON, Esq., British Minister, dated Washington, November 19, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

49. From the Rev. WILLIAM BACON STEVENS, D. D., dated Philadelphia, November 19, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

50. From the Hon. WILLIAM BEACH LAWRENCE, dated Ochre Point, Newport, R. I., November 21, 1854:—

"My arrangements were made to avail myself of the invitation of the committee of the New York Historical Society for their anniversary; but I was yesterday prevented, by my anxiety for the health of a near relative, from participating in a convivial festival.

"Under other circumstances, I should have been very much gratified to renew my associations with my old friends whom I expected to meet, while a recurrence of your celebration would have vividly recalled many events connected with a membership of thirty years' standing, and especially the interesting incidents of your last decennial festival, when, in consequence of the early departure of the venerable chief, under whom it was my happiness to act in the foreign service of the country, as well as in the administration of the society, it became my duty, as your presiding officer, to welcome another illustrious statesman, who, like your last President, has, full of years and of honors, terminated his earthly career.

"I am convinced that no one then present will ever forget the thrilling feeling which pervaded the whole assembly, when John Quincy Adams told us that he was there by the summons of Mr. Gallatin, who had added to the official invitation, "*let us shake hands, once more, on this side of the grave.*" I am sure that our venerated President required no sponsor, especially in the Historical Society, but should any future historian be disposed to misconstrue any act of his, we may reply to him the declaration of John Quincy Adams, 'I have known Albert Gallatin for fifty years, and been engaged with him repeatedly in the public service. We have been almost invariably opposed in our political opinions, but I have never known a more honest or a more honorable man.' I quote from remembrance, and believe that I have not stated Mr. Adams's remark by any means as strongly as he made it.

"At the decennial anniversary to which I have alluded, we had from our orator the fruits of that agency which has put New York in possession of her archives, and to have originated which is one of the society's triumphs; while the completion of the semi-centennial list by the name of the 'historian of the United States,' carries us back some thirty years, when the rare ability and distinguished learning, evinced in several occasional discourses, achieved for this branch of literature an independent recognition. Nor were the discourses before the Historical Society unworthy of a place, side by side, with those of the great statesmen and scholars of the East. If Boston had her Webster and her Everett, New York had her Verplanck and her Wheaton. One of these addresses circumstances have recently brought to my particular notice; and I had intended to allude to it, had it been my good fortune to attend your celebration, in order to show what fruits, independently of the direct contributions to the declared objects of the Society, have been the results of your association. I refer to the discourse pronounced before the New York Historical Society, in 1820, by Henry Wheaton, who, though an adopted citizen of New York, is looked to with just pride by the State, to which my allegiance is due, as a son of her soil. Having occupied whatever leisure my rural avocations for the last year afforded in the humble task of his annotator, I

have found, in the *History of the Science of Public or International Law*, the germ of those great works, which have placed the name of Wheaton imperishably in the same category with those of Grotius and Vattel, and which have made him an authority in all the cabinets of Europe. Even at the time of the appearance of the discourse, it obtained from the venerable ex-President Jefferson, and the elder Adams, commendations of no ordinary character; while Marshall wrote to the author, 'Old Hugo Grotius is indebted to you for your defence of him and his quotations; you have raised him, in my estimation, to the rank that he deserves.' The notice of it in the *North American* was from the pen of Edward Everett.

"Not only in the case of Koszta, or on a question of diplomatic immunities, are the 'Elements of International Law' quoted, but in the late memorable debate in the British Parliament, on neutral rights, involving the policy of the recent 'declarations' of England and France, both Philimore and Sir W. Molesworth appealed to the American publicist as the highest authority extant. It is not, indeed, too much to say, that the place which Grotius filled, which Vattel, as a more modern writer, afterwards occupied, is now assigned to Wheaton. It is well known that after preliminary studies, of which the Historical Discourse is an evidence, and twenty years' distinguished service in Europe, Mr. Wheaton was recalled in a way that his associates abroad could not regard otherwise than as a disgrace, which, according to their system, admitted of no explanation. His friends know that with his sensitive disposition, his letter of recall proved his death warrant, and that no distinction that awaited him, in the cordial reception of his fellow-citizens of all parties in New York and elsewhere, could avert the fatal blow. Among other papers of a similar import lying before me, is a note from the celebrated traveller and distinguished philosopher, Baron Alex. Humboldt, who was also the personal friend and confidential counsellor of the King of Prussia, which, as affording the best comment on the wisdom of a policy which makes the highest diplomatic appointments dependent on the moves of the political chess-board, I am induced, though it is not very easy to decipher it, to transcribe. It is dated:

"POTSDAM, ce 18 Juin, 1846.

"Le roi gémit souvent sur votre départ. Il sait combien vous nous étiez utile, et il ne conçoit pas l'erreur d'un gouvernement qui se prive d'un tel appui. Je suis sûr que le roi et la reine seront touchés de la délicate attention du voyage de Madame Wheaton. Je ne puis encore me persuader qu'on ne vous destine pas quelque grande place en Europe. Votre nom et celui de M. Gallatin restent hautement placés, et vous avez l'avantage sur lui d'excellens travaux historiques. C'est une grande et belle conception aussi que celle qui a ouvert la route du Nord des Etats-Unis, par Trieste au Levant, et dans l'Inde. On vous le doit. Agréez je vous supplie, mon cher et respectable confrère, l'hommage de mon inaltérable dévouement.

"A. HUMBERT."

"My allusion to Mr. Wheaton's discourse would not have been with a view to his *éloge*, but in order, as appropriate to a semi-centennial anniversary, to refer to the new epoch in the law of nations which may well date from this year. When the address in question was delivered, the nations of Christendom had recently emerged from a series of wars, which had been conducted with an utter disregard of all neutral rights, leaving England with an unlimited sway on the ocean, and without, as on former occasions, the recognition in the treaties of peace, of any maritime principles. The right which England claimed as a part of the law of nations, authorized a search of neutral vessels, not only for contraband of war, but

for enemy's goods, and when once on board, on a belligerent plea, she claimed, as incident to the right of search, the taking from our ships of any American seamen that her officers might choose to suspect to be of British origin. Hence impressment, and the war to which it gave rise. France, also, while she admitted that free ships made free goods, besides her repeated infractions of neutral rights by imperial decrees, maintained as a principle of her public law, for which there would seem to be no better reason than a verbal antithesis, that enemy ships make enemy goods.

"Europe is again at war, and we are neutral. But how changed is our position. All the belligerents agree, not only that free ships make free goods, but, except in the special cases of blockade and contraband, entire immunity is accorded to neutral commerce; and with that power which originated the armed neutrality of 1780, we have consecrated these principles by a treaty, to which we have invited all nations to accede. As to the rule of '56 and the colonial policy, they remain only as matters of history. In view of these circumstances, I cannot but look on the year 1854, when the rights of neutral nations have been, for the first time during an actual European war, recognized by the great belligerent powers, as a new epoch in international law; and that idea, had I been with you last evening, and had a suitable occasion presented, I should have presumed to embody in a toast.

"I had intended merely to write a note of apology to show that, though my future lot is cast elsewhere, I am not insensible to the compliment which the invitation of the committee implied, nor forgetful of the State to which I owe my nativity, nor to her historical reputation; but I find that thinking of your Society has led me into a prolixity, for which even my thirty years' membership can scarce serve as an adequate excuse."

51. From Sir ARCHIBALD ALISON, dated Glasgow, December 1, 1854, regretting his inability to be present.

52. From FITZ-GREENE HALLECK, Esq., dated Guilford, Connecticut, November 22, 1854, regretting that in consequence of his absence from home, he had been unable to acknowledge or accept the invitation of the committee.

53. From R. SCHLEIDEN, Esq., Bremen Minister Resident, dated New Orleans, December 8, 1854, regretting that his absence in Cuba, had made it impossible for him to acknowledge or accept the invitation of the committee.

54. From GEORGE GIBBS, Esq., dated Steilacoom, Washington Territory, November 18, 1854, as follows:—

"I have the honor to acknowledge your invitation to attend the semi-centennial festival of the New York Historical Society, and regret that the unfinished state of the Pacific Railroad will prevent my reaching your city in season. I trust, however, that at the *Centennial*, that important work will itself have become an historical fact, and that the guests who may have the honor then to represent the State of Washington at your board, in commemorating the event, will sympathize with the disappointment of their forefather.

"In the retrospect of that half century which you are about to celebrate, few events have occurred more remarkable than the recent estab-

lishment of American power upon the Pacific. Known only till within the last few years as a remote and savage region, the western shore of the great South Sea has sprung suddenly into an importance that we can as yet but partially estimate. Its prominence in the future relations of our country is a subject of magnificent speculation rather than of foresight. Confronting, as it does, in its infant strength, the most ancient of existing kingdoms, now tottering in decay, the thoughts of its people already turn to that further strand, the eastern verge of the Old World, with the presage that at no distant period they may reach that also.

"But to us as a people there as yet belongs no history. The structure of our society is of yesterday. Beyond that, our only record is of individuals. The discoverer, and his successor, the hunter, appertain to what may be considered as the romantic age; though to them the reality was stern enough. Except in the tradition of personal adventure, they have left no impress behind. They have not, like Cortez and Boone elsewhere, been the founders of the state. The impulse which peopled the territory has obliterated even their landmarks.

"To the farthest West there is, however, the future; and if you will, in this connection, accept a toast, (for I presume the 'other appropriate proceedings,' to which you refer, include a dinner), I will offer, *nunc pro tunc* :—

"The Hereafter of the Pacific States. May it be as glorious as the Past of their Atlantic sisters."

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JAMES W. GERARD.
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